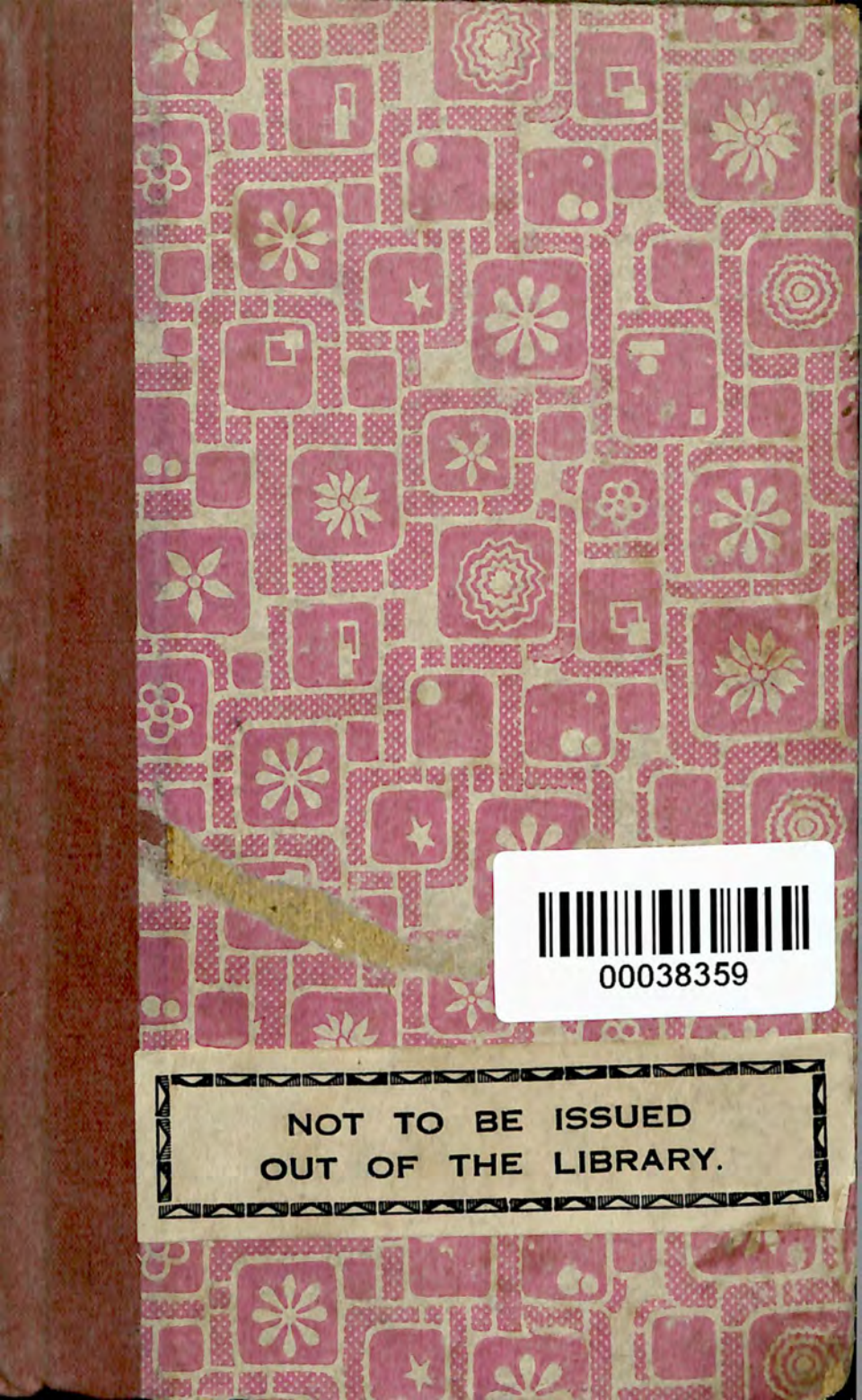
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AUSTRALIA

VISITED AND REVISITED.

A NARRATIVE OF

RECENT TRAVELS AND OLD EXPERIENCES

IN VICTORIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES.

38359

BY

SAMUEL MOSSMAN,

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AND

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WITH MAPS BY A. K. JOHNSTON, GEOGRAPHER TO HER MAJESTY.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

The authors of the following pages had doubts at the commencement of their labours of being able to lay before the public, in the present state of the Australian Gold Colonies, a work of such a character as would not only be useful to those who might determine upon hazarding their fortunes in them, but at the same time be interesting to the general reader. Though they still entertain fears of having accomplished this object, nevertheless they venture upon its publication; trusting that the truthfulness and fidelity of their statements will interest all classes of readers.

Nothing that is likely to mislead people should be stated by travellers at any time; nor will we suppose that wilful misstatements are made by contemporary authors; but at the present time it is particularly important to be careful and accurate either in descriptions of, or observations upon, these distant colonies, where so many of our countrymen, and those who confidingly accompany them, are resolved to cast their fortunes. This consideration has had its weight with us; and if we ever thought of indulging in flights of imagination, our inclinations have been checked by the fear that our so doing might tend to mischief. Consequently, the reader will find in these pages nothing more than a simple narrative of facts observed during a journey through these important colonies at the most interesting period of their history, presenting an unvarnished picture of the country and its inhabitants as they exist under the new order

of things created by the gold-discovery; while the details given of the ordinary occupations pursued by the colonists, and our hints regarding them, are the result of long and practical experience in the Australian colonies in the public service, as settlers, and otherwise. And although changes are rapidly taking place in these young communities, yet we are confident that the traveller, with our book in his hand, some ten or even twenty years hence, will easily recognise the various cities, towns, districts, and estates herein described, however greatly they may have increased in extent and population; and we flatter ourselves that the tenour of our remarks on the social and political condition of the people are based upon those sound principles of human nature which will apply for all time. So that the intending colonist, who may be guided by our statements in his selection of a spot for his future labours, will find that we have neither exaggerated nor misrepresented the country or the inhabitants of any one locality.

With these few observations we send our volume forth to the public: in the full confidence that, if there is any thing in it worthy of their approbation, it will work its way.

London, February 1853.

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AUSTRALIA VISITED AND REVISITED.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE OUT.

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ANY one who glances occasionally over the casualties recorded in our shipping intelligence, must remark the very small number of vessels lost on the outward voyage to the Australian colonies; while scarcely a week elapses that we do not find in the registry at Lloyds', intelligence of some ship foundering at sea, or being swallowed up in a hurricane, during the much shorter voyages to America and the West Indies. These facts are easily comprehended by experienced mariners and old voyagers; but passengers who for the first time intend hazarding a long voyage at sea imperfectly understand them. Nevertheless such is the case, that the passage out to Australia, occupying three or four months, and sailing over an extent of ocean nothing short of fifteen thousand miles, is safer than an ordinary week's voyage through the German Ocean or any of the British Channels. In fact, the time when most danger is to be apprehended from shipwreck or collision, is while the vessel is

threading its way through the intricacies of river and channel navigation that lie between the ports of departure and the open sea. When once the "good ship" is clear of the foggy coasts which encircle the British Isles, and "Biscay's sleepless bay" is among the latitudes behind, all is plain sailing and fine weather for the remainder of the voyage. So free from tempest have we experienced it, sailing from London in September, that the ship's long-boat could have accomplished it without great risk.

As our voyage out was what ship-masters consider an average passage, a slight sketch of it will convey to the reader some idea of the ordinary route pursued by a sailing vessel bound for Australia. And as we whiled away a few minutes pleasantly each day after eight bells pricking out our latitude and longitude on the map obligingly furnished to us by the mate, we have inserted at the beginning of this chapter an outline chart of the world with our route laid down; to which we refer the reader on perusing the following synopsis of our log.

On the fourth night from the Downs, cleared the English Channel. The Lizard Light dipped below the horizon. Strong breezes and squally weather. Every body, *i. e.* the passengers, sick and uncomfortable. In three days more, crossed the Bay of Biscay: ship under single-reefed topsails. A few male passengers appearing from below in pilot-jackets; but suddenly vanishing at the aspect of the weather. Eleventh day out, passed the island of Madeira. Fine summer weather. All sail set. Every body on deck. In three days more got into the north-east trade-winds. Studding-sails set alow and aloft. Weather warm, clear, and pleasant. Every body dressed in light clothing. N.B. The passengers considered themselves by this time old sailors, and wondered how people could be frightened at a sea voyage. Sixteenth day out, entered the tropic of Cancer. Thermometer at 85° in the shade. Two dogs attacked with hydrophobia, and both destroyed.

There are one or two remarkable circumstances connected with this canine disease, which we observed on the voyage and in Australia, worth recording, particularly as we are not aware of their having been mentioned by previous travellers. Out of eight dogs taken on board in

England, five became rabid and were destroyed before we reached the equator. The other three "crossed the line" without shewing any symptoms of the malady; neither did they exhibit the smallest tendency to become rabid in passing through the southern tropical zone, although exposed to greater abstinence from water than those attacked while we were in the northern tropic. The disease has not been known amongst the bands of dogs which infest the towns in Australia, and which are all descended from the hydrophobic curs of Britain. In fact, if we are not in error, scarcely an authenticated case of this unaccountable distemper has been known in the southern hemisphere. How will physicians solve this problem? Is it an atmospheric agent which engenders the virus? and is that agent an impurity in the air of the northern hemisphere which does not exist in the south? A little inquiry into this subject would no doubt elicit some valuable medical statistics for the information of patients, and relating to the well-known salubrity of the Australian climate.

To resume our log. We were bowling through the waves of the North Atlantic at the rate of eleven knots an hour. Sailed through the north-east trade-winds in ten days. Got into the doldrums for a couple of days. Calms and tropical thunder-storms. Every body listless and lazy. Quantities of ginger-beer and soda-powders effervesced to quench a universal thirst; but of small avail. Fresh water at a premium. Melting moments. Every body bathing. Patent shower-bath—a bucket and a basket. Glorious sunsets. Several ships in company. Signal the longitude. A breeze sprung up; which proved to be the south-east trade-wind. Spoke an Indiaman homeward bound. Sent letters on board. "Crossed the line" on the thirtieth day out, in longitude 20° west. Instead of the ancient ceremony of father Neptune and his train appearing on board to demand largess for invading his briny kingdom, our captain commemorated the occasion by simply stretching a thread across the glass of his telescope, which he endeavoured to persuade the ladies, when they saw it through the instrument, was the veritable line; and with one or two of our fair friends it went down remarkably well. Of course we all enjoyed the joke; and no doubt all were

better pleased than if they had been subjected to the barbarous custom of being shaved with a rusty iron hoop and drenched with water.

Sailed merrily through the south-east trade-winds. Saw shoals of flying-fish; caught a few, and found them very delicate food. Weather warm, with occasional showers, which made the air feel humid and every thing muggy. Every body airing their linen and bedding; the ship looking like rag-fair. In eleven days from the equator we crossed the tropic of Capricorn. Found the influence of the trade-winds as high up as 25° south latitude, within two degrees of the South American continent. The vessel sailed so steadily that we dispensed with the battens around the cabin table. The passengers began to feel the monotony of life on board ship: love-making and mischief-making the order of the day, for want of better to do.

Most passengers of an intellectual turn of mind, who have never been a long voyage before, plan out all sorts of tasks to be accomplished, and resolve to apply themselves studiously to their books on the passage out. We have never known an instance wherein one tenth part of such resolutions have been carried into effect. And how is it possible in these Australian ships, where they are so crowded? There is a continued turmoil in them from six in the morning till ten at night, which not only disturbs all application to studious pursuits, but prevents the enjoyment of ordinary light reading. This, coupled with the heat during the first fifty days of the voyage, when the thermometer ranges from 75° to 85° under the awning, throws a lassitude over both mind and body which prostrates the most active temperament, during which period the only occupations practicable are those of eating, drinking, and sleeping. Every body knows or has been told that there is no place like shipboard to obtain an insight into your neighbour's real character. The reason of this is, because the intellectual part of our nature lies dormant, and we become known to each other through our propensities, which cause us to display more broad and evident traits of character than the purely moral or intellectual. Pent up as we necessarily are at sea within the narrow compass of a ship's cabin, and with scarcely

any outward incidents to counteract the selfishness of our nature, it is not to be wondered at that the individual character will appear in a different phase from what it assumes on shore. Hence the main-spring of the animal functions, eating, becomes the ruling passion; and man's belly for the time being is his god. Herein lies the cause of nineteen out of the twenty quarrels which notoriously occur on board ship. From stem to stern the quality and quantity of food has always been a matter of contention between the dispensers and the receivers. We have seen Jack raise the growl of mutiny because his junk was bad; we have seen steerage passengers pitch the casks of maggoty biscuit overboard, and demand fresh bread from the captain in language not to be trifled with; and we have seen poor deluded intermediates call the captain to account at the end of the voyage for the musty provisions doled out to them; ay, and even the most amiable disposition in the cabin is not proof against the dire effects of an unsatisfied appetite. When under its influence, bright eyes and fond lips are then more prone to look with devotion upon the wing of a fowl than the face of a lover; and jealousy will often send a pang through the stomach—we had almost said the heart—when the captain sends a favourite tit-bit of turkey to some one on the other side of the table.

To resume our log. We had sailed out of the S.E. trades and got into variable winds; the weather became unsteady, and we made a zig-zag course for a few days. The intermediate passengers grumbled at their rations becoming of inferior quality; and there were symptoms of the water getting scarce; the captain pacified them by stating that he would put in at the Cape to refresh the ship's stores. As the details of our log are here given with a view to initiate all classes of passengers into the mysteries of a long voyage, we shall be excused by adverting in this place to the condition of these intermediate passengers for the benefit of future emigrants; particularly as so many vessels now sail from English ports for these colonies fitted up to carry one class of passengers only, whose dietary scale and accommodation are similar to what was provided on board our ship for the intermediate passengers.

Those who have made a long voyage at sea are well aware that attendance and a proper regulation of the meals on board constitute the first desideratum towards the comfort of the passengers. Hence a cabin-passage is always high, in consequence of table-furnishing expenses, stewards' wages, &c., besides wine, spirits, and beer. But amongst the class of passengers referred to, from the small amount of passage-money paid, no stewards can be provided to attend the table, to draw the water issued daily, or the provisions weekly, or to take them to the galley to be cooked; consequently, every passenger, male and female, must attend to these necessary duties, besides carrying down the food when cooked to the long deal table, and then either eating alone or in messes of six or eight, each one washing the dishes in turn after meals. Such duties become rather disagreeable to ladies and gentlemen who have taken cheap passages on board uniform-rate ships, or as intermediate passengers, with the supposition that all the difference between their accommodation and that of the cabin-passengers consists only in the quality of food and cabin furniture. We are confident, however, that a medium arrangement could be adopted, satisfactory to the passengers and profitable to the owners. The latter could provide vessels at rather higher rates, in which the requisite attendance might be supplied. Suppose the 'tween decks to be partitioned off into three or four separate compartments, with companion-ladders at the fore, main, and after hatchways; thus dividing the long workhouse-looking table which at present reaches clear fore and aft the whole length of the ship. That each compartment with its thirty or forty passengers should be attended to by a man and a boy, whose services could be easily obtained gratuitously for their free passage out. Add to this a more liberal scale of fresh provisions; fewer berths in each cabin, with more conveniences, and better ventilation; and we are sure that the majority of intending emigrants of this class would freely give half as much more passage-money if they knew all the disagreeables attendant upon the present unsatisfactory arrangements.

Is there no inventive talent amongst our ship-builders to suggest some improvement upon the interior construc-

tion of a ship? Are there no better plans for the accommodation of passengers, and stowing cargo, than the old stereotyped model of a hold 'tween decks, cabin, and steerage? It is a disgrace to this great maritime nation to suffer the departure of some of those floating pesthouses, which are constantly leaving the docks of London and Liverpool for our colonies, with less attention to their sanitary arrangements than will be found in the lanes of St. Giles's! Particularly those bound for the colonies under consideration, where needy ship-owners and unprincipled shipping-agents send their vessels to sea, each with its human freight of some two or three hundred souls stowed away in bunks and cabins like pigs in an Irish drogher, there to be stewed up for a couple of months in the stifling atmosphere created by this overcrowding, beneath the blazing sun of the torrid zones from Cancer to Capricorn.

This digression has lengthened our log; but if we can by such remarks be instrumental in improving the accommodation on board ship for future passengers, we shall consider that we have done our duty.

Our course now lay across the South Atlantic towards the Cape of Good Hope. Fortunately, after the two days' tossing amongst the "variables," we met with a fine generous westerly breeze, which carried us all the way. The weather not much cooler than within the tropics, in consequence of the sun nearing his summer solstice in the southern hemisphere. Observed also that he rose upon our right, and set upon our left, attaining his noon-day altitude in the northern heavens. Anchored in Table Bay on the fifty-seventh day from London, which may be considered a good "run" for a sailing-vessel. The same distance is easily accomplished now by ocean steamers in twenty days less. Remained three days in harbour. A break in the passage, by calling at this "half-way house" of all nations, is an agreeable change to the monotonous life on board ship. In two days more we sailed over the Agullus bank with a strong westerly breeze. The wind was now right astern, which caused our barque to toss about on the mountain waves of these soundings, rolling about from port to starboard like an old tub; which made it the most uncomfortable description of sailing we had

yet experienced. This is contrary to a landsman's notions of sailing with a fair wind. Nevertheless, we did not quarrel with the breeze, as it carried us gallantly on our course at the rate of two hundred miles per day; so that in five days we had sailed a thousand miles into the Indian Ocean, which bounds Australia on the west coast. Most vessels, in order to take advantage of these westerly winds, which prevail in the higher latitudes of this ocean, run down their longitude in about 40° south. Our captain followed the usual practice of ship-masters, and steered east by south until we attained that latitude. The effect of this proceeding upon the domestic arrangements of our company was an entire change of clothing; everybody appeared on deck with their winter garments on, which at once reminded us of the aspect of the ship and the occupants when we started from England. In the sharp bracing air which brushed our faces, we could almost fancy that we were nearing the old country instead of its antipodes; as one of our fellow-passengers remarked, there was a "scent of home about it."

We were not destined to carry this favourable wind all the way across with us, for it suddenly chopped round to south-east when we were about midway; and blew a gale of wind which caused us to lie-to for nearly three days. This is the most unpleasant condition for passengers to be in at sea, as there are few who can hold up their heads while the ship is pitching and labouring; and the worst of it is that she is going astern all the time. It is at such times also that the want of order and regularity amongst a large body of passengers, such as our intermediates were, shews itself more plainly. The utter helplessness of some, and the lazy and dirty habits of others, mingling higgledy-piggledy with the tidy neatness of their more orderly cabin-mates, present a scene that would be ludicrous, were it not for the sufferings of the latter. Many were the complaints brought before the captain by ladies who occupied cabins in this portion of our ship against the filthy habits and language of those whom circumstances had thrown them amongst. But what could he do to amend matters? he could only appeal to their feelings of shame, which, in most instances, were entirely blunted. Here his authority

ended. He could not enter the cabin of the filthy indolent passenger, whose bedding had not been aired during the voyage, and oblige him to get up. Neither could he compel him to wash his greasy plates and dishes, which were stinking under the nostrils of his cabin-mates. In this respect, government emigrant ships have the advantage; for in them cleanliness and order are enforced by officers appointed for the purpose; whereas in the others no discipline can be maintained, simply because the passenger who pays his way considers his cabin as his castle, and will do as he likes in spite of every body, within the bounds of mutiny. The captain and his subordinate officers have the ship's duties to attend to; and they generally consider that the comforts of such passengers do not come within the sphere of that duty.

A top-gallant breeze just abaft the beam soon carried our good ship on her course again; and on the thirtieth day from Cape Agullus we were in the longitude of Cape Leeuwin, the south-western angle of the great island-continent of Australia, as some geographers term it. Here, in latitude 39° south, we got into foggy weather and baffling winds, having all the indications of our proximity to land; the thermometer rising to 70°. At last we had reached the latitudes of this far-off land, a circumstance which at once engrossed the attention of every one on board from the cabin-boy to the captain; and of course many were the disquisitions upon its geographical position and relative distance from the mother-country; the sum of which, although generally known, will be none the worse for being inserted here, merely to refresh the memory of the reader, whom we request to glance cursorily at its position on the chart of the world, already referred to during our voyage; and as we found it advantageous afterwards to re-read carefully about this distance from the port of our destination all the available books to be had in the ship upon the subject, we advise all intending colonists to make a note of this in their journals. The same desire to turn all attention towards the goal of our enterprise seemed universal throughout the ship. In fact, it was only now, on reaching the latitude and longitude of the Australian shores, that our motley assemblage of pas-

sengers began calmly and seriously to think and speak of the prudence of the step they had undertaken; for the hard rubs encountered in elbowing the crowd of people whom they could not avoid on the passage out seemed to give them a foretaste of what they should meet with in the land of their adoption. The excitement and, in many instances, the romance which had prompted numbers of our fellow-passengers to emigrate, had long since passed away, and the reality of their position for the first time presented itself, when they were just upon the eve of landing on the shores of the promised land; and if the secret feelings could have been recorded of many on board, no doubt they would gladly have returned to the certain comforts they had left for the uncertain visions of wealth they imagined in the land before them. A seriousness, nay even a gloom, pervaded the conversation on board, as our fellow-passengers spoke of their future proceedings. To all such who may have similar fears of what is in store for them, we say, Be of good cheer, the land you are proceeding to is not a *foreign* land; the same sympathies which followed you from the homes you have left will greet you when once you mingle in the domestic circles of the people of Australia.

To return to our lesson in geography. We take it for granted that the reader is acquainted with the geographical position of Australia on the globe, viz. that it is situated in the southern hemisphere, and that it is the largest island in the world; the details of which are, that its greatest breadth from east to west is about 2700 miles, and at its widest part, from north to south, about 2000 miles; its general superficies being nearly three million square miles, or two thousand millions of square acres of land, a superficies not far short of the extent of Europe. At the same time it must not be supposed that the entire area of this immense island is equally fertile with the European continent, or capable of supporting as dense a population. As a tract of country, it is more allied, in its geographical features, to the African than the European continent, where the amount of available land for the support of man is limited to a tithe of its actual extent. From the data of travellers and explorers such as Sturt, Leichhardt, Strze-

lecki, and Mitchell, we are justified in concluding that the interior of Australia is a desert, a second Sahara; by geologists considered the recently upheaved bed of a portion of the Indian Archipelago, with scarcely an oasis upon it to furnish nourishment for the subsistence of its aboriginal inhabitants. Upon its borders are found salsolaceous plants; but on its desert plains vegetation ceases; and the western rivers, which rise in its golden cordillera, vanish occasionally in its sandy bosom. Within that portion which is the more immediate object of our notice, known as south-eastern Australia, we may reasonably conclude is limited the extent of territory, for many years to come, for successful colonisation by the Anglo-Saxon race; for all attempts to establish settlements of a like nature on the western, northern, and north-eastern coasts have hitherto failed, as at Port Essington and Port Curtis; or but slightly succeeded, as at Swan River and King George's Sound. The existence of this desert was problematical, until the father of Australian explorers, Captain Sturt, penetrated into its arid plains in 1845, while commanding an expedition formed by the South Australian government, to cross the island from north to south. After suffering great privations from thirst and hunger, under a heat which raised the thermometer to 137° in the shade, Captain Sturt and his gallant band were forced to return from this inhospitable region before they had reached half way across. Other exploring parties had previously been repulsed in their attempts to penetrate this *terra incognita* from the east coast on account of its barrenness. At the same time they all concurred in the opinion that it was a desert; most probably depressed below the level of the sea, where fresh water and vegetation was not to be found. Of all the indefatigable explorers, however, who have enlarged our knowledge of Australian geography, Dr. Ludwig Leichhardt has been the most zealous to clear up this questionable point; and we have every reason to believe that he has sacrificed his life in the attempt. During his successful overland expedition from Sydney to Port Essington he did much towards defining the extent of this region to the north-east. But still his explorations were confined to that territory, and its shed of waters, between this desert and

the sea-coast. On his return he was impressed with the idea that this great object of Australian discovery was to be accomplished by proceeding from the high table-land situated about two degrees inland from the east coast, in 26° south latitude, and directing his course towards Western Australia, a distance little short of 3000 miles in a direct line; and hoping to find in the desert region between, a succession of oases, like those in the Arabian and African deserts, which would enable him to recruit his party on the journey. He was likewise confirmed in the supposition that such oases existed in the interior from some remarkable circumstances related upon this head by the settlers, on undoubted testimony, which were to this effect, that some cattle which had been taken by sea from New South Wales to Swan River settlement in Western Australia, were known to have *returned overland* to the station where they had been bred. An amount of instinct perfectly astounding, and which is borne out by facts of a lesser degree, that have occurred amongst the horses and cattle in the pastoral districts of Australia, and equally surprising. Leichhardt concluding from this, that if there were provender and water for cattle on the way, the accomplishment of an overland route from Eastern to Western Australia was as likely to be done as his journey to Port Essington, even although he should not cross the desert; with those sanguine expectations, backed by his hard-earned experience, he formed a party of ten, with the same slender equipment which satisfied all purposes in his previous route, and started from the Moreton Bay district on the east coast for the far west in the spring of 1847. Since then no tidings have been heard of either himself or his companions. And the probability is, that if they have not been massacred by hostile aborigines, their starved bodies are buried under the sands of the great desert.

From this general view of the entire island, let us now glance at the geographical features of the two provinces through which our narrative will soon lead us; what we may now term the Gold Provinces of the British Empire. On reference to the subjoined map of this valuable section of Australia, it will be seen that it forms the south-east angle of the island, and is comprised within the original

boundary of the well-known colony of New South Wales, the oldest of the British dependencies in the southern hemisphere, around which we may safely affirm all our other plantations in Australasia have gathered and obtained nourishment. And had it not been for the energy and perseverance displayed by the local government in the early establishment of this colony, it is more than probable that this great south land would still have been a *terra incognita* on the map of the world; and the glorious future, opening up to the energies of our fellow-subjects in that Anglo-Australian empire, would have been still hidden in the womb of time.

The province of Victoria, better known as Port Phillip, forms the southern portion of this section, being divided from the parent colony by the Murray river; and from its neighbour, South Australia, by an artificial boundary in longitude 141° east, with its sea-coast facing the south, including in its extent the northern shore of Bass's Strait. On comparing the extent of this province on the map with one of England on the same scale, we perceive a similarity of size and form, Victoria being nearly one-fifth larger; and yet it is only about one-thirtieth part of the entire superficies of Australia. Notwithstanding this large slice off the mother colony, New South Wales still possesses an extent of territory three times that of Victoria, with a sea-board on the South Pacific, from Cape Howe to 26° south latitude, being a distance of 750 miles.

In addition to this geographical information, it will not be out of place to bear in mind that the alternations of day and night are nearly opposite in the meridians of Australia, and the succession of the seasons entirely the reverse of Great Britain. December, the month of frost and snow in this dreary climate, is the warmest month in the year in Australia; and while John Bull is just sitting down to a nine-o'clock supper, the colonist is preparing for breakfast.

To return to our journal: we left off at the hundredth day from the Downs, during which period we had sailed by computation, in round numbers, 15,000 miles; thus averaging 150 miles per day, which is pretty near the rate of sailing of ordinary ships. The same distance has been

accomplished by clipper barques in eighty days; and now that a steam-packet service has been regularly established, the voyage out may be done in sixty days. To those who are restricted to time this mode of conveyance will no doubt be the most preferable; but for comfort during such a long voyage, give us a good roomy cabin in a first-class sailing vessel. In this respect old voyagers like ourselves look upon a ship just as an old traveller on shore estimates an inn,—not for its architectural beauty outside, but its convenient arrangements and table comforts within; we prefer the snug cabin, good table, and civil captain, with ordinary speed, to the swiftest clippers and steamers in the trade, if they are wanting in these requisites. At the same time we should not take a passage in any old "tub" because it was cheap; for there we should be doubtful of the particulars set forth in the bill of fare being carried out liberally. The ship to be preferred is where the owners have the means to send her to sea well stored, and a gentleman to command her. It is reasonable to suppose that the best ship is the cheapest in the end for all classes of passengers, and most profitable to the ship-owner; for in a long voyage like that to Australia, speed and full provisioning are matters of the first importance, where a deficiency in the latter frequently prolongs the voyage by stopping on the way for supplies. During this period seamen's wages and the consumption of food increase the ship's disbursements, without yielding any equivalent. In order, therefore, to lessen expenses as much as possible, the owner of a slow-sailing vessel buys provisions of an inferior quality, which he puts on the table after the third or fourth week at sea, and continues to serve them out until within a few weeks of the termination of the voyage. In a few instances the captains of such vessels have been prosecuted in the colonies for non-fulfilment of agreement, and have been justly fined. But we are certain that the majority of such cases of imposition have not been exposed; not merely from the inexperience of emigrants in such matters, but from the desire that all men feel to hush up grievances on the passage as soon as they reach the port of their destination.

By this time our voyage was fast drawing to a close; a brisk westerly breeze sprang up, with fair weather, which the captain told us was indicative of our proximity to Bass's Strait, which we should enter on the morrow, our 104th day from England, when he hoped another day would bring us inside the harbour of Port Phillip, our destination being the far-famed gold colony of Victoria.

The intelligent reader will perceive, on taking a cursory glance at the ship's track marked out on the small map of the world, the reason we stated at the commencement of this chapter why the voyage from England to Australia is the safest, considering the distance, which can be made on the globe. Immediately the vessel clears the chops of the Channel and sails into *blue water*, she has the whole width of the North and South Atlantic Oceans before her "where to choose;" in nautical language, she has abundance of "sea room," consequently she avoids the hot blasts from the African shores, and likewise keeps far aloof from the hurricane latitudes of the West India Islands, crossing the equator mid-way between the two continents, where the deadly influence of the land under the torrid zone is powerless; running down her latitude in the South Atlantic, she skirts the straight lands of the Brazil coast, where there is no dangerous lee shore, with the steady south-east trade-wind to carry her along; then, immediately that she reaches the temperate regions in the southern hemisphere, she can steer for a latitude amongst the forties, and if a well-appointed ship, not requiring to put in at the Cape, she has a fair wind all the way to Australia, across both the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. To shorten the voyage out, some spirited mariners, taking advantage of the latest discoveries in their profession, have adopted the practice of great circle sailing. This system is simply illustrated by a ship running down her longitude from the South Atlantic ocean to the Australian coast upon the arc of a circle, which describes the rotundity of the earth, instead of plane sailing, according to Mercator's projection, which supposes the globe to be flattened out, as shewn in the accompanying chart. By this method of sailing no less than a thousand miles will be saved in the length of the voyage. In the foregoing log, having sailed from Eng-

land after summer in the northern hemisphere, we were in time to meet the summer in the southern hemisphere, thus experiencing two midsummer days in one year—21st June and December.

Pacing the deck during the middle-watch that night with our anxious captain, we heard the look-out in the forecastle reports a light on our lee-bow. This was soon determined, on reference to the chart, to be the light-house on Cape Otway. As we were running free, ten knots through the water, our skipper gave orders to shorten sail, as he was not anxious to make too close upon the land until daylight; so we turned into our berth and slept soundly till morning.

CHAPTER II.

ARRIVAL AT PORT PHILIP.

Cape Otway—Fate of Gellibrand and Hesse—Heads of the Barwon river—Entrance to Port Philip harbour—The pilot comes on board—First news of the gold discovery—Peaceful demeanour of the gold-diggers—The pastoral interests of the colony in danger—Effect of the news upon our ship's company—Geelong harbour by sunset—Hobson Bay in the morning—Useful memoranda—The townspeople come on board—On shore at Williamstown—Steamboat to Melbourne—First impressions—The Yarra-Yarra river—Scenery on its banks—Arrive at Melbourne.

It was a bright sunny morning in the middle of December when our good ship safely made the Australian coast. As we sprang upon deck with alacrity the instant we awoke, to have a first glimpse of the land, we found the ship, with her full spread of canvass out, sailing cheerily along before a fair west wind within a few miles of the shore, which, as our skilful captain had calculated the previous night, proved to be the bold land of Cape Otway. To us, who had been wearied gazing upon the monotony of sea and sky for so many long weeks, the sight was refreshing and intensely picturesque; a thrill of pleasure brightened up the countenances of each succeeding passenger as they made their appearance on deck, and all turned with looks of curiosity and interest to view this portion of their adopted land which had first presented itself. Such feelings with the mere traveller or tourist are evanescent, for he has a home to return to, and he expects to smile over the mishaps of his journey when he reaches his own fireside. Very different are the impressions on the anxious heart of the emigrant when he first obtains a glimpse of his adopted country; he comes not here to pay a flying visit, to gaze at the sights and "lions" of the country, and then take his departure. Over many thousand miles

of the trackless deep he has wandered from the land of his forefathers to make himself a new home; like a bride, he leaves his kindred and his parents' roof to wed the fortunes of a strange country; to find a resting-place for life, and lay his bones in a foreign land. As the port of their destination heaves in sight, the anxious band of pilgrims notice with eager eyes the aspect of the shore; the most trifling objects are looked upon with intense interest; unanimity of feeling pervades every breast; all petty quarrels are forgotten in the general excitement, and every tongue becomes loquacious in commenting upon the varied features of the country opened up by the moving ship.

The land we had thus made will be seen, on referring to the map, to form the southern portion of the Geelong country, of which Cape Otway is the extreme point, and guards the entrance to Bass's Strait as well as Port Philip. Upon this conspicuous headland there is a lighthouse erected, in every way creditable to the colony, and forming one of three lighthouses maintained in Bass's Strait at the joint expense of the whole group of colonies, for the benefit of all vessels, thereby rendering the navigation of this strait in the night-time as safe as any of the European channels. There appeared nothing inviting about the aspect of the country at this locality as we saw it from the ship. It seems one interminable forest over hill and dale; the hills rising above one another in a succession of "tiers," as they are locally termed, until they attain an altitude of about a thousand feet, forming Mount St. George, which we saw before us towering majestically above its neighbours, and densely timbered to its summit; the foliage of the trees presenting that dark sombre green which so peculiarly distinguishes the forest scenery of Australia from that of Europe.

It was amongst those gloomy-looking "tiers" that two enterprising colonists from Van Diemen's Land, Messrs. Gellibrand and Hesse, met an untimely fate. These gentlemen were among the first who landed on the shores of Port Philip, with their sheep and cattle, in 1836; and it is but just that we should pay a passing tribute to their memory, in the midst of the unparalleled prosperity which now reigns over that land which they assisted in reclaim-

ing from the savage not more than sixteen years back. Their fate was not uncommon amongst the early wanderers through the Australian wilderness. In the enthusiasm which blinds all explorers to the dangers which may beset their path, they started on a tour of discovery through these forests ill prepared for the journey, from which it is supposed that they died victims to hunger and fatigue rather than from any hostile attack of the aborigines. Although such fatal occurrences seldom happen in Australia now, still there are a sufficient number of instances known of people being lost in the bush—particularly in these gold "prospecting" times—that new comers should be careful how they wander away from roads and settled districts.

By noon we had approached within twenty miles of Port Philip heads, and still no opening was discernible into its spacious harbour. That we were steering for the right point was evident from the number of vessels of all sizes coming from the east and from the south steering in the same direction. Upon sweeping the coast with the telescope, however, the break soon became apparent; likewise the lesser headlands of the Barwon river, which finds an outlet here into the straits about twelve miles to the westward of Port Philip entrance. This stream flows through the town of Geelong, with sufficient depth of water for ships of a thousand tons. Unfortunately, like many of the Australian rivers, it possesses no navigable entrance from the sea, otherwise it would soon raise the port of Geelong far above that of Melbourne.

Point Lonsdale, which forms the western, and Point Nepean, which forms the eastern headland at the entrance to Port Philip, both terminate in abrupt crags which are not more than two miles apart. There is nothing very remarkable about them, excepting the appearance they present, as if they had been rent asunder by some violent concussion of the earth, which allowed the waters of the strait to rush in. On reaching the entrance, our ship had to stem the ebb-tide, which forced its way out in an impetuous current. It was as much as she could do to keep moving ahead while sailing through the strength of it, although she was impelled by a good eight-knot breeze.

While in mid-channel we were surprised to see a belt of sea-weed growing across the entrance, which to us suggested the presence of shallow water; we were astonished, therefore, when the leadsman in the chains sounded a depth of seven fathoms. The tide slackened as we overcame the influence of the confined stream; and, rounding Point Nepean safely, we sailed into the smooth water of this broad estuary, which presented to our delighted eyes all the picturesque features of an extensive lake, surrounded by undulating prairie-lands, and covered with a rich grassy turf to the water's edge. Here and there the scene was relieved by hills. On the eastern shore, Arthur's Seat and Mounts Eliza and Martha gave variety to the landscape; and within a few miles of us on the western shore, the lighthouse upon Shortland Bluff presented a pleasing object to our longing eyes.

From this spot we saw a boat push off, which the captain informed us was the pilot-boat. As it neared the ship all eyes were bent upon its occupants, each one speculating upon the news which would first greet us in this far-off land. Whatever those ruminations might have been amongst the motley groups of passengers assembled on the deck of our ship, certainly none of them were prepared to hear the astounding intelligence communicated to us upon this occasion; for we had sailed from England shortly before a knowledge of the gold discoveries in Australia had reached there, and we arrived in the colonies when the "great fact" was seven months old; during which period, as all the world knows, the unparalleled extent and richness of these gold regions had fully developed themselves.

The pilot was accompanied by three gentlemen, settlers in the vicinity of the pilot-station, who had come on board to see if they could engage servants. These gentlemen, you may suppose, were eagerly listened to by us all for a relation of the astounding facts. They stated that in the midst of their pasture-lands they had discovered incalculable treasure. That gold, the reputed source of all evil, the universally-coveted metal, was strewed in abundance around them. They had only to dig, and wash, and blow away the *débris* of the mountains, and the glittering spangles appeared before them. In the rocky

clefts shepherds had found masses of even a hundred pounds weight; and granules had been picked up in the streets of Melbourne by children. Their flocks and herds had been cropping the very grass which grew upon the "gold fields;" and they knew it not until now. They had been ploughing and harrowing the auriferous soil; sowing grain upon it, and reaping the *golden* harvest above, without perceiving the *gold* soil below. Nay, they had even been building dwelling-houses and bridges upon its rocky matrix without finding it. So easily and plentifully did it come to the hand of the digger, that it bore the aspect of having only then sprung into existence from the land; or that it had been scattered there within the last few years through some mysterious agency, instead of carrying along with it the geological fact that its veins are coeval with the primary rocks.

Happy for them that it has been so! The fickle goddess Fortune has, in this instance, borrowed the shield of Minerva, in order to screen the tempting ore from the greedy eyes of man, until he was prepared to work it peaceably and wisely. At first she hid it from the felon-labourers, who were employed constructing the very road to her golden dwelling; whilst the simple aborigines were either ignorant of its existence, or found no utility in its properties. Next, she covered it from the sight of the free emigrants until they had grown sufficient food upon the land, where, in a state of nature, there was so little for the support of civilised man; and until they had established laws, and were ruled by an efficient government, to prevent the crime and anarchy which have invariably accompanied the gold-seekers in other lands. The few brief chapters which compose the history of these colonies thus inform us how the shackled felon has become the instrument of human progress, in clearing the way for the corn-grower and sheep-feeder; how, in their turn, they have furnished food for the gold-digger, who now travels comfortably along the convict-made roads in New South Wales, and partakes of the lavish abundance provided by the free settler, even amongst the mountains and valleys which yield the spontaneous treasure. These providential circumstances, and this succession of events, had shed their

benign influence over the doings of the gold-seekers. Well fed and well clad, with the gold easily attainable, they had nothing to grumble at; for the greater part of them were men who respected a constitutional government with a potent executive. And although the arm of the latter was weak, yet it was sufficient to preserve order amongst them, in a community whose moral strength was its greatest protection. Hence, instead of bloodshed and anarchy disturbing the labours of these gold-diggers, a spirit of unanimity and confidence reigned amongst them. Instead of robbery and murder being frequent, as in California, their persons and property at the mines were as safe as in the well-disciplined towns.

At the same time, this plethora of riches threatened the destruction of the former staple products of the colony, wool and tallow. Like some concealed stream of lava bursting from its volcanic caverns through the mountain-crater, and devastating the plains below, this production of the sterile crags was consuming the labour which had been employed in working out the pastoral wealth of the colony, and would seriously check the sources of two valuable exports. The flocks and herds which had hitherto furnished the colonists with abundance of food and clothing, and whose surplus yield of wool and tallow had paid for their foreign luxuries and necessaries, were upon the eve of being deserted for this new source of gain. The fleece, which materially assisted every man, woman, and child in the colony to purchase annually from seven to eight pounds' value of British manufactures, was growing to waste for want of hands to clip it from the sheep's back. The shearing-sheds were threatened with desertion, and the boiling-pots were standing empty and fireless; whilst the crops of grain were reaped at the enormous sacrifice of one acre being given for securing another. The consequence of this unexpected revolution in the labour-market of the colony was a rise in the wages of every description of servant and workman, which threatened to ruin the employers, especially the wool-growers and graziers, who were offering fifty and sixty pounds a-year to their shepherds and stockmen, if they would remain with them. Mechanics and day-labourers were not to be had in the

towns to proceed with building, and like operations. In many instances, where the master's "occupation was gone," where his workmen took their departure for the gold-fields, he was obliged to follow himself. Men from all classes of the community had been smitten with the fever; doctors, lawyers, and even clergymen, were among the throng who had gone off to the diggings; so that the towns were almost deserted by their male adult population.

It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the impressions this astounding intelligence had upon our ship's company, crew and passengers. A kind of hysterical affection seized every man and woman on board. Some almost cried with delight; and every one gave way to the most unbounded enthusiasm at their good luck upon arriving in the colony at such an opportune period for the advancement of their fortunes. The only serious man amongst us was the captain, who had been informed by the pilot that the sailors were running away from the ships in harbour, so that one-half of them had been deserted by their crews; and those ships that could manage to proceed to sea sailed without their full complement of men; while the sailors were refusing twenty pounds a-month for the run to England in the wool-ships, which now left the harbour with freights of gold equal in value to their usual cargoes of tallow and wool.

With buoyant hopes within us, a good ship beneath our feet, and a fine breeze swelling the sails aloft, we bounded more cheerily than ever across the gently-rippled waters of that spacious estuary. The sun was declining as we passed Indented Head, and opened up the beauties of Geelong harbour. The volcanic-looking cone of Station Peak, and the ranges of hills far away to the westward, with the glorious sheet of water extending for twenty miles in that direction, were lit up by the glories of an Australian setting sun, gilding the varieties of hill and dale and water with a richness of tint, which all the yellow ore in the earth below could not equal. These scenes and associations involuntarily made us exclaim: "What a hopeful country this Australia is for the poor and needy we have left behind in our fatherland! It is more than a 'land of promise,' it is a land of fulfilment. The dreams and spe-

culations of youth, in the enjoyment of riches and plenty, are here realised beyond the brightest hopes. The visionary treasure-seeker in the gloomy regions of the north can here grasp the substance, and enjoy the bounties it will bring to his utmost desires, beneath the loveliest climate that is warmed by God's glorious sun."

Night had set in before we could discern the shipping in Hobson Bay distinctly; for in this land, as Coleridge hath it, "at one stride comes the dark." Still the interest was undiminished as we neared the lighthouse on Point Drake, which now shone a Triton amongst the minnows, as the flickering lights from the many vessels lying at anchor starred the horizon with their tiny lamps. The breeze by this time had begun to die away, so we made but little progress through the water. And as if by one consent, the passengers prepared to retire early for the night. The varied sights which had appeared before us during this our last day of the voyage, and the exciting news which had been communicated to us on this our first day of arrival, seemed to have strained the eyes and ears of us all to their utmost tension; and we "turned in" for the last time into our narrow berths with sleepy eyes, hopeful of the morrow.

We slept so soundly that the dropping of the anchor about midnight, as the ship was "brought up" in Hobson Bay, did not awaken us. In the morning therefore, when we got on deck, we enjoyed more satisfactorily, because it was fresh to the eye, the pleasing view of the surrounding country, and the throng of vessels lying at anchor in the bay. Although the former presents a gratifying prospect to the gaze of the stranger, after three or four months monotonous study of sea and sky, still there is not much for the artist to sketch in the low sand-flats, thinly covered with stunted trees, in the immediate vicinity of the bay. On the eastern shore, a clearing upon some rising ground, with a cottage or two visible through the telescope, is all we have for the village of St. Kilda, a watering-place in the environs of Melbourne. And directly across the bay, in a straight line with Melbourne on the map, are seen a number of small tenements on the beach, with wooden jetties run out for the convenience of landing. But al-

though the city is not more than two miles from this beach, there is no part of it visible from the shipping, except the telegraph-station for signalling the arrival of ships in harbour, for the information of the inhabitants. Looking north, you see the entrance to the Yarra-Yarra river, which flows through Melbourne; and as you can see up the stream for a mile or two, you may judge of the circuitous course of its channel to the city, nine miles distant. On the western shore, objects of a more defined character vary the landscape. Williamstown, with its stone-built houses, within a mile of the shipping, and the lighthouse on Gellibrand's Point, present substantial tokens of the industry of the colonists. But the most enlivening part of the scene was the bay itself, with its fleet of square-rigged vessels, from whence issued the usual cheering sounds of sailors loading and unloading cargo into the lighters alongside. Here, we were informed by the captain, our journey ended, as ships of our tonnage can approach no nearer to the capital town of the colony, in consequence of a rocky bar at the entrance to the river; steamboats and sailing vessels, however, of not more than 200 tons, can accomplish this with safety, and reach the wharves right in the heart of the city.

From our experiences gleaned upon the occasion, we noted the following memoranda in our journal, which may prove useful to subsequent travellers and emigrants. That ships of large tonnage, such as make the voyage out from England, and are advertised to sail for the port of Melbourne, proceed no further than Hobson Bay, situated, as the reader will have observed, at the northern extremity of Port Philip harbour, twenty-seven miles from its entrance in Bass's Strait. That such vessels are not moored alongside any wharf or dock, but lie at anchor in this bay within half a mile or a mile of Williamstown, the nearest point of landing. That there are two ways of proceeding to Melbourne: one by steamboat up the river, nine miles; the other by taking a ferry-boat across the bay, and walking from the beach overland, two miles. And that, upon passengers disembarking, they have to pay for the hire of boats or lighters, to convey themselves and their luggage or merchandise on shore; for this purpose there are abun-

dance of boats plying between the shipping and the beach, under control of the local authorities, who fix the rate of fares to be charged, a copy of which every boatman is bound to produce when called on by a passenger. Steamboats ply between Williamstown and Melbourne every two hours or so, the Geelong boats being the most comfortable. The preliminary expenses attending the disembarkation of passengers at this most inconvenient port come very heavy upon their purses in the present altered state of the labour, market. We would advise gentlemen and families, therefore, not to hamper themselves with much bulky luggage, furniture, or merchandise.

As the day advanced, we were boarded by the port officer and other officials, who went through their business in an off-hand manner that was quite delightful, compared to the fusty old routine of the port of London. These gentlemen confirmed every thing we had heard of the recent discovery; and our vessel was soon afterwards besieged by the townspeople, on the look-out for servants and mechanics. In their conversations with our 'tween-deck and steerage passengers, they dwelt less eloquently upon the abundance of this new product; and several earnestly dissuaded them, with great truth, not to attempt proceeding to the gold mines without some colonial experience. They represented the gold-seeker's life as surrounded with no common hardships; that it was only fit for the old "bushmen" of the colony, who were inured to the life. It was worse than toiling from morn to night at the hardest roadside drudgery in England; and the man unaccustomed to hard labour would sink under it. Besides, it was more or less a lottery; for although many had been fortunate in collecting large quantities, yet the majority of the diggers made little more than an ordinary living, after the expense of provisions, which were dear at the mines, had been taken into account. No one, however, was inclined to engage until they got to Melbourne, and ascertained the state of affairs; so there was a general move on shore soon after breakfast by the majority of the passengers.

Engaging a boat, we threaded our way through the shipping towards Williamstown. As we passed many of

the vessels with their yards apeak, they seemed to be deserted, which we were told was actually the case; in one or two instances, the captains had followed their men to the diggings. We landed at Williamstown upon a rough stone jetty, more substantial than elegant. Upon arrival, new-comers are pleased with the aspect of this small township, from its being the first which greets them in Australia when bound for this port, and from its possessing some good stone-built houses, stores, and hotels. But it is a place of very little importance in the colony, although from its advantageous situation, it should have become the principal sea-port in Victoria; the drawback to its success is the want of fresh water, which is not to be found in its vicinity, and the inhabitants are actually obliged to send to Melbourne for every drop of fresh water they use. It can easily be imagined, therefore, in these gold-digging times, that this necessary article would cost much to bring down. We read in the newspapers that *one pound seven shillings* was given for a load of water, for the use of the watch-house, a load being 300 gallons. As we saw no use of idling our time away in this poor place, we went on board the next steamer for Melbourne, which was the Aphrasia from Geelong, as smart a river boat as any on the Thames or Mersey. There was a large company of people on board, of all classes, and from all parts of the country, amongst whom we freely mixed, and conversed upon all subjects. In that short voyage from Williamstown to Melbourne we obtained a more correct estimate of the character of the colonists, and the resources of the province, than we had gathered from all the books we had ever read. Therefore, gentle reader, in the following unvarnished narrative, we shall only expect to convey to you but a shadowy knowledge of the substance which exists in that land of realities. You must go there and judge for yourself; you should hear the clear hearty laugh of those prosperous colonists, to estimate fully the hilarity of Australian temperaments; you must breathe the air of that intensely blue sky, to conceive the bright glaring matter-of-factness which reigns over the material world of Australia; you must listen to the graphic and truthful expressions of the people, to credit the buoyancy and activity

with which the perceptive and imaginative faculties come into play in that sunny clime. For ourselves, we felt at once, as we paced the deck of the Geelong steamboat, that we had already mingled in the business of the colony, and we talked and laughed with people who were perfect strangers to us with something approaching to familiarity; we did not feel that we were in a strange land; the voices, the faces, the manners of the people were a reflection of our own; and we appeared to be steaming up some quiet river in the old country upon a summer excursion.

First impressions are not always to be relied upon for their correct judgment of men and things; still we are of opinion that, when faithfully related, they convey to others the general character of both, which subsequent experiences give in detail, and rarely obliterate from the memory. Such, at all events, were our first impressions the day we landed on the shores of Australia; and however much we may have forgotten the beauty or novelty of scenes afterwards lingered upon, we have not forgotten them. After leaving the ship—which seemed the last link in the chain that bound us to the old hemisphere—we felt as if a cloak of prejudices had fallen from our shoulders, and we were relieved from the burden. Those superstitious feelings which are cherished so much amidst the gloomy ruins and dark skies of the north, had apparently not travelled so far with us. Even the pleasing romantic notions we had entertained of this far-off land before starting fled from our recollection the moment we put foot on shore. We could not imagine fairies to haunt those dry open thin-leaved forests, or ghosts to hide themselves from the clear daylight or moonlight which prevailed. These impressions never left us during our sojourn in these unromantic every-day-looking regions. Our imagination became divested of all ideas of grandeur or romance upon viewing the occupations of the people, or the quiet scenery of the country. Amongst the former, we saw merely an industrious community, toiling and labouring for a subsistence or an independence, which came readier to the hand than in other lands; and as the latter opened upon us at intervals, we seldom found the prevailing features of the mountains and valleys, the plains and forests, the rivers

and lakes, soaring into the sublime; more frequently they revelled in the beautiful, and as rarely sunk into the insignificant as they fell into the monotonous.

With the flood-tide in our favour, we entered the Yarra-Yarra river, signifying in the aboriginal language "flowing-flowing," from the circumstance of its containing always a current of fresh water, while other streams become merely chains of ponds in the dry season. At its entrance, two miles north of Williamstown, it appears to be about a mile wide, its eastern bank being low marsh-land, with very few trees on it, and the western bank a stony ridge, with stunted gum-trees upon it, scarcely dense enough to be called forest-land. For about three miles you ascend the river in a northerly direction, retaining its width pretty nearly all the way, when it suddenly narrows into a small stream, not more than two hundred yards wide; and this is again lessened a little further on, where it is divided into two branches, what appears to be the main branch still continuing in a northerly direction, the lesser stream meeting it at a right angle from the eastward. The former is called the Salt-water river, and ceases to have the appearance of a river ten miles from this junction; the latter is the Yarra-Yarra, which derives its source from a range of mountains, known as the Snowy Mountains, fifty miles to the eastward. About fifty years ago, this river was ascended by government surveyors, to report upon its capabilities for the formation of a settlement. Pursuing the northern branch, which they found destitute of fresh water, they entirely overlooked the main stream, and reported the harbour to be unfit for the occupation of settlers, or even for ships to water at.

The river at this junction, and up both branches, assumes that peculiar character so frequently met with amongst the Australian streams. Passing through the blackest alluvial soil we ever saw, and imparting to its waters a strange inky hue, it flows between such soft, abrupt banks, covered with dense brushwood to the margin, that it looks more like a canal than a natural current of water; you can see no bottom, not within a foot of the edge; and we were informed that it was as deep there as in the middle. It has not the shelving bed or pebbly

beach which we find enclosing the streams of Europe,—those pleasant sloping banks which lend such a charm to the scenery on the murmuring streams of our motherland. As we ascended the river we saw the carcass of a bullock floating past, which no doubt had fallen in while endeavouring to drink. Many are thus lost annually, as it is impossible for the poor creatures to climb, with their heavy bodies, up the steep soft banks of the river.

Emerging from these brushwood reaches, which form the tortuous part of the stream, you open up to view an extensive swamp on the left bank, the land around it being hilly and open. Upon its eastern margin you can discern some houses of substantial structure on the rising ground, and on the flat below a few scattered cottages of mean appearance, with sheep and cattle pens near them: this is the west-end of the city of Melbourne. The approach, therefore, by the river gives to the stranger rather an unfavourable impression of the town. Further on, tall chimneys begin to appear; then a goodly forest of masts belonging to small coasting vessels, which are enabled to cross the bar at Hobson Bay. Through these the steamer cautiously threads her way, as they line the banks of the river, besides a few which you pass in a small but snug wet dock, behind which are seen several steam flour-mills, with many large and substantially built warehouses, close to which, and facing the river, is an ordinary-looking street, with shops and taverns of similar character to those seen in the sea-port towns of England, with all its attendant noise and bustle of drays loaded with goods from the shipping. As the vessel nears the Queen's Wharf, where you land, the market-square, situated upon rising ground, and closed in by substantial rows of houses, gives a more favourable aspect to the town; still the site does not appear one of the most convenient for the cartage of merchandise from the wharfs. At this point the river expands into a basin, the tide rises no higher, and navigation ceases; here the water is salt, above it is fresh: a dam built across the river upon a natural rock divides the two waters. The town is situated on the north bank of the river, above the point of navigation principally, extending in this direction upwards of two miles. Facing the dam is the custom-house, a com-

pact ornamental building, built of a dark reddish sandstone. To this office we directed our steps immediately we landed, to pass the necessary entries for our luggage; after which we strolled into the town, and took up our quarters at the Royal Hotel, Collins Street.

As it is necessary to jog one's memory often regarding the correct geographical position and denomination of these new cities at the antipodes, we note for the information of the reader, that Melbourne is the capital city of the province of Victoria, situated on the Yarra-Yarra river, which flows into Port Philip harbour at Hobson Bay. By the last general census in 1851, it contained 23,143 inhabitants. As we shall devote a chapter to the further description of this rapidly increasing town and its environs, after we have given our narrative of a visit to the gold-diggings, the reader will excuse our giving any detailed account of it in this place.

CHAPTER III.

ROAD TO THE DIGGINGS.

The gold-diggers in town—Equipment for the journey—State of the road—Bush-flies—The inn at Deep Creek—Classes of travellers on the road—A party from Gipps' Land—The exodus to the Mount—A literary digger—Bivouac with sailor-diggers—Black forest—Protection of travellers—Five-mile Creek—Carlsruhe—Kyneton—An old colonist digger—Campaspie river—Columbine river—View of the Mount.

THE Christmas holidays were now drawing to a close, so we resolved upon visiting the far-famed gold-fields of Victoria without further loss of time; our first visit being directed towards Mount Alexander, whither multitudes were now wending their way, that we might not only gratify our curiosity, but also satisfy ourselves of the truth or otherwise of their prodigious yield; and also, as near as possible, the actual state and disposition of the diggers. During our short journeys out of Melbourne and our visits to the townships in its environs, we had had opportunities of seeing much of these men *en route* to the diggings, and those who had just returned. Among them were men of all classes: the hard-handed able-bodied labourer and the slender soft-fingered man from the desk; those who had been successful, and those whom fortune had not yet favoured. We soon became accustomed to their rough exterior, and in our communications with them experienced great civility; and as the mass of those who had left their occupation for a short time to enjoy themselves during the holidays were not different from other men, and not particularly formidable in their appearance, though unshaven, we had great doubts of the accuracy of the statements and reports of feverish-minded people as to the absence of all order and security of person and property at Mount Alex-

ander. No doubt there had been much excitement occasioned by the government intention to increase the amount of the monthly license from thirty shillings to three pounds; of which excitement much had been made for the moment by the absurd cry, that the government intended the measure as a blow against the labouring man. That there were irregularities, and also some cases of crime committed amongst them, we do not deny; and such cases there will always be, more or less, among such masses of men; not more, however, we venture to say, than there would have been among any other population under similar circumstances. In truth, among the real Port-Philippian gold-diggers then in town, clad in their peculiar plaid or chequered jumper, there appeared to us more of fun and frolic than of viciousness. And although subsequent accounts describe the prevalence of crime to be alarmingly on the increase both in Melbourne and at the diggings, yet we are of opinion that among the depredators who are stated to infest the town and country, few Port-Philip men will be found. It is more than likely, as that impartial newspaper the *Melbourne Argus* affirms, that they consist of the escaped convicts from Van Diemen's Land, and other desperate characters from the neighbouring colonies, who have been attracted with the multitude to the superior gold-fields of Victoria. The measures adopted by the home government in dispatching a large body of the metropolitan constabulary, as well as an addition to the military force, will soon, we hope, restore the colony to its former tranquillity.

Such being the view we took of the state of the population, we prepared our equipment accordingly, and on the 27th December we were among those who left Melbourne for Mount Alexander. Having purchased a good and serviceable horse for the occasion, we stuffed our saddle-bags with a supply of biscuits, tea and sugar, and slung a quart pot and pint pannikin at our saddle, with a blanket strapped on in front rolled up in a piece of oilskin. We of course were armed, not because we were apprehensive, but you feel more confidence in knowing that you would not altogether be without defence, or at the mercy of any fellow who might speculate upon taking you unawares.

Mount Alexander is about seventy-five miles north-west from Melbourne, in the Mount Macedon district, and the road is generally good at this season; but in winter, or in rainy weather, there is a great difficulty for drays, or indeed any vehicle, to travel along it. The country you pass through is open forest-land, and sometimes it is quite free from trees. There is plenty of grass all the way, and some excellent patches of arable land. All the settler had to do in many places was to plough, to sow, and to reap, without clearing the land, and to depasture his sheep on the uplands fresh to his hand.

As you proceed out of town, the country becomes tolerably high, so that you have a fine view of the city, the shipping, and the distant mountains. Here and there are scattered good farm-houses with suitable outbuildings and offices; some of these we visited, which let for 1*l.* per acre. There are some very good roadside inns at suitable places on the way, with a few houses about them, which look like the commencement of future villages, perhaps towns. It was rather too late in the year to see this country to advantage; but nevertheless we saw much to admire and gratify, in spite of the flies which tormented us. These troublesome insects, so annoying at this season of the year, are of the same size and shape as the ordinary English house-fly; but the colonial fly has such a powerful sucking proboscis, that when it perches upon the corner of your eye and inserts it, the irritation is extremely painful. The best protection from their attacks is to wear a veil, which is commonly done by bushmen; but the closeness of this upon the face in the hot weather is extremely uncomfortable, which made us prefer facing the plague to adopting the remedy.

About twelve miles distant on the road we came to the Deep Creek, the descent to which is very steep and precipitous. There are spots upon the picturesque banks of this creek that are truly beautiful, which, as time rolls on, will become favourite retreats for the wealthy inhabitants from the heat of the towns. The inn at this spot was crowded, and several hundreds had stopped for the advantage of the water for their cattle. Those coming from the diggings were riotously enjoying themselves at the inn; those *en route*

to them preparing for the night by first unyoking, watering, and turning out their bullocks or horses, and then proceeding to light a fire and otherwise prepare for their evening meal, which, as usual, consisted of the bush fare, viz. tea, damper, and mutton.

Other parties remained but an hour or two, and then proceeded onward, stopping at some spot for the night where water and food was to be obtained for their cattle.

A great many were on foot—that is, not belonging to a party with a dray or cart. These men were labouring under wallets of great weight, besides a blanket each. They had taken the chance of the road and a rough bivouac. Many had knapsacks of the kangaroo skin; these latter were generally from Van Diemen's Land. Of the former many were runaway sailors, new-comers from Adelaide, mechanics from the towns, day-labourers from the country, idlers (of which there are always plenty in every community), and such as had no means, but were determined to try their fortune, encouraged by the success of others, and the reports, which almost deprived men of their reason.

Every class in the community was represented here: merchants, physicians, lawyers, responsible tradesmen, farmers, clerks; and many of the superior classes were pointed out to us among the mass we saw in this place and on the road. The successful diggers, or those who were ambitious to be in the fashion, or somewhat different from the sailor or bullock-driver, were generally clad in the plaid or chequered jumper; every one had a belt round his waist. Altogether the scene was very striking and picturesque, and the costumes most useful for the labour their wearers had to go through.

After a short time we resumed our journey, and on the way overtook four men and a boy of about twelve years of age, perhaps not so much; they were tired, and the little fellow was quite knocked up. We got off our horse and walked with them, putting the youngster on it; and thus we journeyed on for several miles. This party had walked from Gipps' Land, two hundred miles, Mount Alexander being the point of attraction where they hoped to work out their fortunes; they had left their wives behind, making such arrangements as they were able for their

safety, and fearlessly struck across the country, that they might reach the desired spot. Where will this matter end? was our reflection. Here are men, and one of them an intelligent one,—formerly a Devonshire farmer, as he informed us,—who had settled in Gipps' Land, leaving their families and settled occupations for a gold-seeker's life. They stated that every man who could had left, or would leave that quarter; and the same thing was going forward every where, either for these diggings or for other localities. They regretted leaving that district, of which they spoke highly, and described it as altogether different from these sheep-walks and highlands, every acre of it being fit for the plough. But what could they do? so many labouring people had left, and so many employers of labour had gone likewise, that in their case there was no alternative but to follow.

A gentleman coming up spoke to us; he looked ill and fatigued; he had had a very long walk after his horse in the morning, which had strayed, not being properly secured; he determined, if possible, not to be so served again, as he had procured a very long and strong tether rope. He asked us where we proposed to stop for the night, as we were a great distance from the "Bush Inn." At the first place where water was to be obtained, was the reply of our friends from Gipps' Land. We were now passing over extensive plains without any trees upon them; and to all appearance we were a long distance from water. On these plains there were a great many wagons and drays, equestrians and pedestrians, passing to and from the diggings, by whom the Gipps' Land party were informed that water was to be had about two miles off the line of road, pointing towards the spot; at that spot, therefore, they resolved to pass the night. The young boy was then taken off our horse, we mounted, wishing our friends good fortune, rode on, and soon overtook the stranger who had spoken to us, and with him journeyed on; he was surprised at our not going with the men, thinking, as we were walking, that we were of one party. We found him to be a very agreeable person, belonging to Melbourne, of some literary reputation, as we were afterwards informed. He fully confirmed the statements in the journals as to the

productiveness of the gold-fields, and as to the effect the discovery had had upon society generally; but he indulged in the expectation that emigration, and the throwing back upon the labour-market such persons as had tried and failed, or who were unequal to the severity of the labour from any other reason, would put all to rights; that in the meantime it was clear there was nothing for many to do but to join in the scramble: such being his view, it was either his pleasure or convenience to form a small party, which was working at Forest Creek; that he had been in town on some matter connected with the party, and was now returning. From his appearance we thought such rough work would be too much for him; but his weak state of health was probably the result of a passing illness; mentally he was energetic enough, and we hoped he would prove bodily so.

Being overtaken by the night, after we had ridden on a few miles further through a really beautiful country, undulating and rising into small hills, with that open forest-land so common to Australian scenery, and being still six or eight miles from the "Bush Inn," we began to look about us for a resting-place. At length, among many fires, we directed our steps towards one. Around it were some sailors belonging to a ship they had left at Melbourne; their party consisted of five. The leader and another man had gone back to town with a horse and cart for something they required, leaving them in charge of the tent and other things until they returned. They were smart young fellows, and very civil; with them, therefore, we bivouacked. The creek was not running, and we had therefore some difficulty in finding a water-hole to which we could take our horses with safety. At length we succeeded, some distance off; and then bringing them back, we secured them to the trees in a spot where there was plenty of good grass, which they seemed to enjoy. It will not be necessary to give a description of our repast; suffice it to say we had plenty. We enjoyed the blazing fire; and it is most important to provide a large quantity of wood for fuel, or otherwise towards morning you will suffer from the dews. The night was clear, and rather cold. In Australia they are very brilliant; more so, we consider, than in

similar latitudes in the northern hemisphere. The stars appear intensely bright and glittering. Our companion being ill, soon felt disposed to prepare himself for the night, and these kind fellows gave him all they could to add to his comfort. Being quite well ourselves, it was late before we left the fire. There was not any thing to fear personally, but as there had been several instances of some of the gentlemen on foot *borrowing* horses without the leave of the owners, it was necessary to be on the alert. However, all was well, and we rested soundly, and very early in the morning were on the road. Our fellow-traveller being still very ill, we pushed on to the "Bush Inn," around which a little village has gathered, or rather the commencement of one. It is delightfully situated in a valley thirty-three miles from Melbourne, near to the commencement of the Black Forest. The house itself is a very poor place, however, the accommodation being but very indifferent, and extremely dirty: allowances were to be made, certainly, from the multitudes of people coming in and out; but the only thing the innkeepers on this road appeared to think of was how to turn the present chance to account; and there was no doubt but that they were making large profits from the sale of liquor, a far more certain mode than by digging for gold. We gave our horses a feed, and after resting them sufficiently long, we determined to proceed, preferring to trust to our own supplies rather than mix up in such a scene as presented itself to us.

The Black Forest commences near this inn; it is a barren tract, with iron and stringy bark trees, and such as are sure indications of an inferior country. It was considered, however, to have very much the character of a gold country, and it would not create surprise in us to hear of some rich deposits being found there. It is about eleven miles in breadth, but how long we did not learn; the road from here passes Mount Macedon, which is on the right, rising finely; and from a thousand points subjects worthy of the painter are before you, with that dark and frowning mountain forming a background. It is particularly striking as you descend to the "Bush Inn."

This forest was a noted place for bush-rangers some years since; and it may again be the resort of robbers, as

the recesses of this apparently inaccessible mountain would afford a good retreat, and the forest itself is lonely enough for any outrage to be committed there without fear of disturbance during its perpetration. The gold will be a great temptation to the unlucky and desperate: it behoves the government to be on the alert; by forming an efficient body of mounted police, we have no doubt good order will be maintained, and people enabled to travel in safety. The Council, however, must not be niggardly; if good men are to be employed, they must be paid in these golden times liberally, otherwise they will not get them.

In the midst of this forest we stopped for an hour, and managed to make a very good meal.

Passing through the forest, we came to a small plain, at a place called the "Five-Mile Creek;" the water was very good, but the thousands of horses and bullocks passing up and down the road had left no grass. From hence to Kyneton is about nine miles, through good pasture-land, though in places we considered it somewhat too wet and cold; but we were in a much higher country here than that hitherto traversed on the road, and we expected this change of temperature. From this point you keep on ascending gradually, until you finally come to Forest Creek at Mount Alexander, thirty miles distant.

At Carlsruhe, the next inn on the road, there is a chain of ponds and an excellent house of accommodation. This, we were told, it is the intention of the government to take possession of as a protective station. There is much land here enclosed; and we do not doubt but that the government will do that which is equitable to the proprietors. Positions must be had on the road, and this offers many advantages. We soon arrived at Kyneton, fifty-four miles from Melbourne,—a good commencement of a village or town, having its blacksmiths' and butchers' shops, stores, accommodation-houses, &c., and something like a street of small and very uncomfortable-looking wooden houses. All the country around is very good, open, and undulating, with plenty of water in a river a little below, then in pools. There had lately been finished a large hotel in this township called the "Robert Burns," which in sober times would have afforded every comfort that could be wished.

for; now, however, all is riot and confusion. If such is to be the result of this gold discovery, Victoria may be a country to make money in, but not to enjoy life.

On the road we had been joined by an acquaintance of our sickly companion, an elderly man, who had formerly possessed considerable means; but fortune had not been favourable, and he was now proceeding to the diggings with a party to court her smiles; he was a most pleasant man for the road, he seemed to know and be known to every one. He was the man for the occasion; and with his assistance a capital supper was provided for us at the "Robert Burns," of which, however, our sick friend was too unwell to partake. Rest was the best thing for him; so amidst all the noise and confusion, he went to his bed to seek that rest of which he was in such need. Poor fellow! he must have had a miserable night of it; for the floor of the room was covered with people, glad to get under cover at any charge that might be demanded. And every room in the house was the same; there must have been several hundred people on the premises. After seeing our horses fed and stabled, we had some supper; and having secured, as we thought, a shake-down, fell asleep upon the sofa. It was well that we did so; for when we inquired for our bed, and saw the sort of thing offered, we preferred taking our chance at one of the bivouac fires not far distant, than be exposed to the horrors of a crowded room and a drunken atmosphere. The night was fine, and, though rather cold, with our cloaks and blankets we managed to make it out famously; and after a good wash, at early dawn we were ready to proceed on our journey.

Our fellow-traveller was also up early, and we proceeded together: he was much better, but very far from being well; and notwithstanding the disagreeables of the night, he had slept tolerably well, thanks to his being fairly worn out. We crossed the Campaspie river at this place, over which there is a bridge a little below the hotel; and passing through a well-watered and beautifully undulating country for six miles, we reached the Columbine, a clear stream running to the north, over which there is a very indifferent bridge. At this spot we stopped, lighted a fire, and partook of a good breakfast. This spot has been se-

lected for a township, for which it is well adapted, being not only a beautiful site, but with plenty of wood and water and a rich country around it. As we proceeded, the country still continued grassy and the soil good; to the right of the road there is a considerable extent of it enclosed. The view up and down the river is very picturesque and park-like. In the distance are high hills, Mount Macedon rising proudly, dark, and frowning, and Mount Alexander visible in the distance, the country towards it rising gradually; on either side is fine open forest-land, with an abundance of grass.

CHAPTER IV.

MOUNT ALEXANDER.

Forest-Creek diggings—Luck of the diggers—Fortune often favours the weak —Gold-digging a matter-of-fact occupation—Discomforts of a gold-seeker's life—Subject to illness from exposure—Dust and desolation—Dreary aspect of the country—General character of the diggers—Effects of the gold-discovery on colonial society—Stock and land will rise in value —Australia the real El Dorado—The labouring man's view of the subject —Rise in wages—The whole subject a currency question.

As you approach Mount Alexander from the Columbine river, the country rises more abruptly to within about four miles of its base, where you enter a slope between the hills which leads you over the higher land, and you pass into a valley, at the bottom of which is a creek: that is Forest Creek, which in all time coming will be famous for the quantity of gold found in and about it. As we proceeded, the tents of the diggers began to appear, increasing in number for about a mile, at which point the valley appeared full of tents, like the encampment of a large army. Although many parties had gone away at this season of the year on account of the deficiency of water, the Christmas holidays, and for other reasons, there could not have been less than three thousand tents, and every hour was adding to their number. About two miles into the valley we came to the "Shepherd's Hut," which had been an outstation on the run before the gold discovery. Here we met some old friends, with whom we intended to pass the few days we should remain in this wild though interesting locality.

The first night, however, we accepted the invitation, and partook of the hospitality and shelter of our fellow-traveller from Melbourne and his party at Golden Point, a considerable distance further down the creek. A more extraordinary scene cannot be imagined than what was

presented at this point. The whole valley had been torn up by the diggers: in the bed of the creek, and on the rising ground on either side, and up the lesser valleys which led into it, holes and pits were dug, from one to twenty feet deep. The Commissioner had judiciously restricted the extent of these, so as to afford room for the tents of the diggers and communication between them.

The tents were in every place. The newspaper-offices, eating-houses, and stores, of which there were a great number, besides traffickers in gold, doctors, and such like, were principally on the sides of the main road, and near the post-office it was quite a village. From this spot the conveyances start for Melbourne during the week; there is then a great crowd, and it is the busiest locality in the valley. The diggings in this creek extend for a distance of many miles, as much as ten or twelve, to the Lodden river; the whole of the ridges and gullies running down into it have proved very rich in their yield of gold, while many of the back ranges and gullies have also produced good samples of nuggets and dust. Two miles or more from the post-office further down the creek the tent of the Commissioner appeared, well situated on a rising ground; he was surrounded by several other tents, and the scene would have made a good picture; around this official locality the largest stores had been erected, while the whole space was thickly covered with tents. At this spot Friar's Creek joins Forest Creek, the diggings extending eight or ten miles at least from the junction; the road, however, crosses the ranges a little below, and in about five miles more it comes upon the creek.

There are many small hills in the valley now well known, such as the Red Hill near the post-office, the Adelaide Hill, and the White Hill, pointed out to the visitor as spots from which vast quantities of gold have been obtained. And although they were the localities where the diggings first began at the mount, they still yield largely.

It was really astonishing to see the quantity of gold obtained: the diggers were not satisfied with ounces! Unless they got pounds in weight, they thought themselves doing badly. However, it would be a great mistake to

conclude, and would be untrue to state, that all were picking up gold by the pound weight. Many could not pay their expenses; but there have been fewer failures at Mount Alexander diggings than those we afterwards visited in New South Wales. There is no comparison between the Turon and these diggings, in regard to the quantity of gold obtained, and the enormous amounts realised by hundreds. It would be impossible, however, to advise any one in this matter; fortune often favours the weak and neglects the strong. We saw lads who, we were assured, had made, and were making, from one to three ounces a day; while hard-working and able men were pointed out to us who had not got a pennyweight, and were compelled in consequence to hire themselves to live, having expended all their means; but still desperately determined to continue at the exciting employment, rather than fall back upon the labour of the country, which so much needed them. Whilst we were in a store purchasing some corn for our horses, a lad under sixteen years of age brought some gold for the store-keeper to weigh; there were nearly twenty-seven ounces of it, for which *2l.* 10*s.* an ounce was offered him; which he refused, saying he thought he should get more. This gold was obtained from a hole he had been permitted to work out by a party leaving it. He went into the hole on the Saturday, and on Monday he was possessed of the quantity here mentioned. The circumstance did not surprise any one; for the fact of getting large quantities of gold was so common, that people said only that the lad was lucky, and it would be a good start for him.

To most people at a distance there appears some romance in gold-digging; they are excited with the idea that they may kick up a stone and find twenty pounds of gold under it, and cannot imagine how people can refrain from seizing a pick and breaking every piece of quartz they pass, to see if there is another monster nugget in it. But this is all a delusion; gold-digging is a real downright matter-of-fact trade; so many hours of common labourer's work, so much gold; so many buckets of earth, so many ounces: and once a man is amongst the diggers, he feels no more inclination to take a pick in his hand for the

chance of what he might turn up, than he would to enter upon the labour of English navvies, whose allowance is three cubic yards per day.

The labour is always great, and sometimes exceedingly so: a great many fail; and the dirty work, mud, and slushing in water, the wretched cooking and uncomfortable beds—if such as the great mass have can be called beds—the discomfort of sitting about in the open air between sundown and bed-time, and rising cold and damp in the morning, besides the pain of training the body to a severe and incessant labour, are so contrary to the habits of the many, that few can stand the training. No one, therefore, should think of attempting such work, unless he feels himself equal to any exertion, mentally and bodily, and prepared to rough it in the extremest sense of the term. It is very easy to distinguish those who have been any length of time at work from the new arrivals, by their worn and dirty dress, their beards, and their thin, lank faces; for even the most healthy of them have a haggard appearance. A few were complaining of dysentery, and some of them had bad eyes; the latter occasioned by the flies, which are terribly annoying; and the former generally goes its round amongst the new-comers, though most of the men are remarkably healthy at this time of the year; but the water in many places was very bad, and its ill effects were much felt.

To this must be added the excessive heat, much greater in consequence of all vegetation being destroyed. To convey an accurate idea of the desolation around you is almost impossible. These diggings being situated in a timbered country, the visitor might expect to see some verdure under the leafy trees, contrasting with the snow-white tents, and every thing to please the taste. How different is the reality! The road, which winds along the creek through the diggings, is, from constant traffic, exceedingly dusty; and as the gusts of wind are very violent, every thing is covered with it; and thus the white tent soon loses its freshness, and becomes as sombre and as dirty as its neighbours. In the same way such trees as have escaped the axe are dusted to an unnatural brownness; even off the road the earth is so trodden by the thousands who are constantly passing and repassing, that all verdure is gone;

there is not the least sign of it, all being nearly bare and dusty; and as the summer advances, this locality would have a dreary appearance. On the southern side of the creek the ground is so torn up, that it resembles nothing we ever saw; a stone-quarry does not quite convey an idea of it, still it is the best comparison for the English reader; for the horses and cattle which thronged the diggings had eaten off the grass on the hills near the creek, and even cropped the shoots from the few shrubs that grew among the roots, stripping every particle of verdure from the ground, and exposing the jagged rocks on the bare surface, thus presenting any thing but a pleasing picture to the eye.

Much has been said of the turbulent and criminal character of the colonists congregated at these diggings. However, we shall only speak of the people as we found them. There are a great many highly respectable individuals in the world's estimation among these men, though there is no difference in their appearance generally, the occupation making it convenient to assume the ordinary digger's costume. We invariably found them civil and kind; and we are inclined to suppose that a great deal of what has been said about the insecurity of life and property amongst them, has been made by persons for some particular purpose of their own. No doubt, disorders will from time to time break out among such a body of people gathered together from all quarters; but we feel assured that the great mass are for order and peace, and therefore the government, by the wisdom and liberality of its measures, will have nothing to fear. The question that agitates the minds of all thinking men is, will these great discoveries be for good or for evil? Whatever may be the result, these colonies will have to pass through a fearful trial: agriculture, sheep, and stock have hitherto been the pursuits of the colonists; following these pursuits, they and the colony have prospered in a most remarkable manner, and were going on to still greater prosperity, when gold is discovered to an extent never before heard of—never before even dreamed of; the rogue and vagabond of a month back, as well as the honest hard-working labourer, mechanic, and men accustomed only to small means, who never thought of realising

more than a competency, have become capitalists. But so far from decent tradesmen and hard-working labourers becoming dangerous to society by being thus independent and enabled to purchase land, the very opposite of that is more likely to follow. Those who look forward to party feuds between the squatters who have hitherto possessed most influence in the colony, and gold-diggers who may now possess it, will be disappointed, we hope, in their expectations that the whole system of the colonial society will be inverted. They forget that the moment a man, by fortuitous circumstances, is raised in the social scale, his views with regard to wealth are changed, or greatly modified; thus property, which was exposed to attack, would receive the support of those men on their own account. A regular flow of emigration, however, sufficient to supply all employments may be counted upon; and the stockholder, instead of being one day the master and next day the slave of his man, ill-served for ruinously exorbitant wages, as we have heard many say, will have servants at the rate which almost every settler prefers, fair to the employed as well as employer. The large population will consume the fat stock, and the settler will realise a price for the whole carcass, instead of for a portion as at present; and the accumulation of capital, and consequent desire to invest, will cause a demand for stock and stations, and raise their market value; so that the pastoral property of the country, instead of being ruined by the gold discovery, will be more easily managed, more productive, and more marketable than ever, if the whole matter is fairly worked. Thinking in this way, we have no apprehensions whatever, in the end, for the interests connected with the land. No doubt much inconvenience may, and probably will, be felt in many places from which labour has been withdrawn; but ultimately those who are unsuccessful, and physically unfit for the work of a miner, will fall back upon the land and improved wages, and by degrees such labour will return to its old quarter. However, during the progress of this change many may be ruined. If the presence of gold is to constitute the El Dorado, here is the real El Dorado. California must admit that its mines are outdone,—that Britain's sun is not set,—that she still possesses

within her dominion an inexhaustible store of the coveted metal; that which makes man mad, by inducing him to abandon the basis of his true interest, viz. *industry*, for that which fevers him, and has a tendency to make him look upon his fellow-men with envy and distrust.

Avarice, it is impossible to deny it, is the prevailing passion here; all other passions seem to give way to it; and those passions and vices which too often are found accompanying it are shewing themselves. Our boasted Anglo-Saxon race seems not in this matter superior to those races that have fallen when possessed of that which the folly of man has permitted, by making gold the representative of real property, the only great thing to be desired—the only thing to give power and influence and command of all that man seeks. At this moment the framework of all industrial enterprise, which raised the colony to its present state, is suddenly shaken. The passion for gold has drained away the greater portion of the working population. When you hear the labouring class say—suggested to them by some low popularity-hunter—speaking of the flock-owners, with an oath, "Oh, they have had their day!" one feels sad at reflecting on the possible result of this discovery on society and feeling.

This scarcity of labour was severely felt by the stockholders: bullock-drivers, stockmen, and shepherds' wages had doubled in many places where men could be procured; and we heard of instances in which flocks were left to take their chance, or several flocks were put together. As we passed one of these flocks where two were put under one man, the fellow said, "he would not stop there in such times; that these were the days for labouring men!" Short-sighted man! as if the abandonment of industry, though it may lead some to fortune, will ever benefit society so much as following industry perseveringly. Wages every where in the bush were enormously high; 30*s.* a week and rations for indifferent labour! As we passed along, we inquired, and found that some had engaged men to reap their crops, shortly expected to commence, at 1*l.* 5*s.* an acre. These wages must be submitted to, or the crop lost. But will the land generally be cultivated again? Time will determine that; at any rate the farmers, with such prospects

before them, are more likely to take a turn at the diggings than follow their necessary occupation; if so, what will be the state of the country? What will those people do who are unable to be gold-diggers, either from age, infirmity, or sex, or from any other cause? It was such reflections passing through our mind that induced us to address the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria upon the subject, and enclose to him a memorandum on the gold question, which the reader will find in Chapter XVIII.

If we were in power, we should be intensely anxious until the principle submitted was acted upon; after it was, we should have great hope that by raising other interests we should negative the evil effects of gold,—effects that have been injurious to all people hitherto possessing gold-mines. Gold, like every other thing bestowed by a bountiful Creator upon man, has nothing in itself that is injurious; it must, therefore, be the mode in which communities treat it that makes it so. The whole matter, however, is a currency question—a question few comprehend, and upon which in all countries there is a great difference of opinion. We have seen gold selling at Mount Alexander at *2l.* 12*s.* and *2l.* 10*s.* the ounce, and it has been sold nominally as low as *2l.* 5*s.* by those in extremity, while the same gold has realised 4*l.* in England. These are fine times for the store-keepers, who make an enormous profit upon every thing; they and the buyers of gold would, of course, object to any regulations which are calculated to interfere with their enormous gains: but the government has a duty to the people to perform; and its profit and its interest, and in this case its duty, should induce it to adopt some course which would be a protection to the hard-working miner, and at the same time take care of all other interests in the community.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOLDEN CREEKS.

Visit Friar's Creek—Bush hospitality—Probable extent of the gold-deposits—The diggers' habits open to improvement—Abandoned diggings—Discomforts at the dry diggings—Hardship and fatigue comparative—Prospects for gentleman diggers—Extraordinary instances of good fortune—Gold companies—Carting the golden earth to the Loddon River—The digger's El Dorado—Gold-washing—Yield of the surface-diggings—Pit-diggings—Formation in which the gold is found—Best season to commence digging—Appearance of the gold as it is found—Colour of the Victoria gold—Hopes of the gold-digger.

On the 31st of December, 1851—the close of that memorable year in the history of Australia—we visited the Friar's Creek diggings, which form a portion of the auriferous deposits around the golden mount. Our gold-digging friends were very desirous to obtain every information concerning that locality; and we were but too glad of the opportunity to shew them how much we appreciated their kind hospitality—a hospitality so freely proffered where the most selfish passions of our nature are supposed to be brought into play. Nor during our stay amongst those people did we see the hungry man or newly-arrived digger refused a bit of damper, or a pot of tea where it was to be had, and welcome; and those who opened their larders most liberally were the older hands of the colony, who had been nurtured in the hospitable manners of the patriarch settlers. The fear was, that the influx of new-comers, who had never experienced the well-known hospitality of the country, would lessen the display of this kindly feeling by a want of reciprocity, and be the means of creating a bad feeling between them; for in no part of the world is the inhospitable man contemned more than in the bush of Australia.

Friar's Creek and Forest Creek are both tributaries of the Loddon river, which forms one of the southern

branches of the Great Murray river. The former creek joins the Loddon about ten or twelve miles from the "Shepherd's hut" at Forest Creek. Between the two creeks there is a range of hills, the distance apart being about five miles. These hills are intersected by veins of mineral quartz, presenting all the usual indications of gold; there is, in fact, nothing to distinguish Forest Creek or the ranges in its vicinity, with their iron-sandstone, quartz-rock, and slaty broken ridges and ravines, from thousands of similar localities throughout the colonies of Victoria and New South Wales. And upon testing the soil of these ranges, the government geologists have already discovered indications of the gold alluvium over 400 miles of country; and every month is adding fresh workings to those already known. Similar ranges also are stated to extend as far west as the Pyrenees, and as far south as Wilson Promontory, crossing 500 miles of country; and from that point along the whole Australian cordillera as far as Cape York, 1500 miles to the northward, the same formation occurs. What an exhaustless field is here for the gold-seeker! We are not speculating widely, when we state that time will shew that the few holes scraped out since the first diggings on the Bathurst mountains are but the commencement of the gigantic operations which are yet to follow. The pursuit is but in its infancy; and generations to come have before them untold treasures in the auriferous deposits of Australia.

A knowledge of this should curb the hasty enthusiasm of those who are going unprepared for the hardships they will have to encounter, when a little delay might place them in more favourable circumstances. It is as absurd to suppose that the richest localities have already been found, as it is to imagine that fresh veins will be generated in the matrix of the rocks; both of which erroneous conjectures have been promulgated by people in the colonies who pretend to a scientific knowledge of the subject. A further consideration of this question ought to suggest likewise to future gold-seekers the adoption of more judicious and systematic methods of washing and raising the auriferous earth; also a better regulation of the hours of working and repose; more comfortable descriptions of dwellings; and

especially an improved arrangement in cooking their food and partaking of meals, which would be more conducive to their health and comfort. A little time spared from their labours for such purposes could never be considered ill-spent, neither would a few extra pounds be thrown away. No sooner does a party come upon the ground to commence operations with their licenses in their pockets, than they rush like madmen to their task, without any concern for their future comfort, which they feel all the more if they are unsuccessful. When we passed tents and "gunyas" in such a state of confusion and filth inside, that a pig would have turned up its snout in disgust at them, we considered that cleanliness and order could be maintained even here, if the greedy occupants would but spare a little time from their exciting work. Many, however, gloried in the dirt that surrounded them, and prided themselves on their dirty attire.

As we descended the range, following the bed of the creek, in which there was now no water, the abandoned diggings were very numerous; those who had been at work had been driven away for the present. As soon, however, as there was water, they would recommence their labours; and from what we have since heard, the most extraordinary success attended them. Proceeding in the same direction for a mile or so, we came to where the valley widens, and where the labours of the people had been prodigious. Enormous holes had been sunk in the bottom of the valley, and on the sides of the hills not a stone was left unturned. Though there were still many men about, yet the greater part of them had been driven away from the want of water.

At these dry diggings the discomforts of the diggers were enhanced by the great distance they had to go for water. A good wash was a luxury they rarely enjoyed; and few of them undressed on retiring to rest. In fact, these ordinary attentions to the toilet were of little avail to protect them from the dust blown about in all directions by the wind. So far, allowances are to be made for the dry-diggers. Inside and outside their tents and gunyas, every thing was of the same dingy, dusty hue. Even the victuals could not be protected from the palpable powder, which

we felt by the sand crunching amongst the chops between our teeth: and yet we must qualify our judgment of these discomforts by stating, that they did not appear much greater than those endured by the Irish labourer, who is sifting lime or sand in England for a shilling or eighteen pence a-day. Our estimate of the discomforts of a gold-digger's occupation are those which would be endured by a person unaccustomed to manual labour. Fatigue, hardship, and discomfort, under these circumstances, are entirely comparative. What the brawny armed navigator would consider merely ordinary work at the diggings, the slender-limbed office-man would account frightful labour. And so the hod-man who lives amongst dust and lime, swallowing the dry particles, and allowing his clothes to drop off his back hardened by their amalgamation, would find no fault with the discomforts of a gold-digger's life. He would be as much at home lying down in his dirty clothes for weeks together, in a tent or bark gunya, as he was at home on his straw pallet in his mud cabin. Place a man, however, in the same situation, who has been accustomed to all the artificial manipulations of the toilet, with whom such habits have become a second nature, and then the loss of the ordinary comforts of civilised life cannot even compensate for the golden rewards of his dirty labour. Hence, in judging of the amount of privation which the gold-seekers undergo in Australia, and of the hardships they describe, we should be guided by the stamina of the men and the former habits of the writers.

In our perambulations down the valley of the creek we saw a fine young man—the son of a neighbouring settler we were told, who had been accustomed to take charge of stock upon a cattle-station—at the bottom of a hole digging and pitching up the earth; he was in a dreadful state of perspiration, when, resting for a moment, he looked up to his brother, and exclaimed, in a most dismal tone, "Oh, Frederick, this is dreadful!—what a change it is from our pleasant life at home!" Although accustomed to what is called a rough life in the bush, even this young man felt the toils of a gold-digger's occupation more than he could bear. What must not those feel who have proceeded thither fresh from the towns and cities in the

mother country, arriving on the ground without the slightest experience of what colonial roughings are? If the clerk from a banking-house or a merchant's office is inclined to lay down his pen and take to handling the pick-axe and shovel as a gold-digger, we do not say nay, provided he marches to the field of operation with the requisite physical energy and habits necessary to encounter the hardships attending this novel pursuit. The extent, however, to which these qualifications will be taxed in such a sphere, few individuals who have been unaccustomed to hard labour are aware of. And it is a great and mighty change to the office-man from any of the large cities of the United Kingdom, to give up all his comforts and amusements for this rude life in the mountains of Australia, even though they be strewed with gold. Many, we are certain, will wish themselves again in "Old England." However, in this matter it is useless to advise; for the love of gold will make men encounter a vast deal more than the fatigue of procuring it at the diggings.

A hole sixteen feet deep was pointed out to us from which one hundred and fifty pounds weight of gold had been taken out by one man of the name of Darcy. This statement was confirmed by the Commissioner with whom he had deposited the gold, valued at upwards of 7000*l.* sterling. Other instances were mentioned where enormous sums, such as 10,000*l.* worth of the precious metal, had been obtained by parties of four and six from similar holes, eight, sixteen, and eighteen feet deep, where they came upon the golden earth. The luck of such men made others almost mad. But the severe labour and exposure, the illness and bad fortune some had to endure and put up with, checked the enthusiasm of many, although the general success kept up the mania. All persons in this locality were doing well; none had been unsuccessful in procuring more or less of the gold. The surface-diggings were very rich even to the summit of the hills; and as much as 6*l.* a-day per man had been obtained. So easily was it found, that we picked out some specimens from the root of a tree, which, in its fall, had torn up much earth: the roots of this tree had been well picked; but there was some gold still left. A party of Ayrshire men, whom we

efitered into conversation with, had obtained, they said, thirty pounds weight of gold in one month from holes and from surface-diggings. From them we received some specimens of gold in ironstone.

Those parties of four, six, and eight, whom we have mentioned, worked extremely well together, because they were all on an equality; no one was master: the cradle-rocker of this week was cook next week; each one took the other's job by turns; and all shared equally in the collections of gold. Nowhere did we come across any large body of men working under a superintendent, or belonging to a public company. The most intelligent men we spoke to upon the subject were doubtful of such companies succeeding; they said, at the best they would never be able to compete with individual enterprise, and it would be almost impossible to keep a large party of fifteen or twenty men together; it would be constantly liable to be broken up by the men deserting, after all the trouble and expense of bringing them free from England to the field of operation. And although the most stringent arrangements could be entered into in the colony between such companies and their servants, it would be impossible for the managers to enforce their agreements in the lawless localities of the gold-diggings. From these opinions, we have great doubts whether any of the Gold Companies, which this discovery has given rise to in London, will be effectually carried out, however honest their promoters, or however efficient their officers may be. As to those which may be termed Bubble Companies, formed by designing knaves to dupe the public, we need only mention the case of one, to put people on their guard how they invest, where 20,000*l.* of the money subscribed by the shareholders was *bonâ fide* paid for a tract of land in the colony, reputed, upon the most flimsy evidence, to contain gold alluvium and gold quartz; but which has turned out, upon examination, to be destitute of any mineral wealth whatever. In all these companies we have remarked, that there are exaggerated plans set forth with regard to their management on the field. They make a grand parade of sending out scientific engineers to conduct their operations, and talk of erecting large steam-engines, and expensive mining machinery at the

diggings, as if gold-digging in Australia were the same as mining in Cornwall, where both the overseers and miners have to serve long apprenticeships before they are qualified for their tasks. Such means and appliances may be profitably used where difficulties are to be contended with in extracting metals from their ores by chemical methods; and mining we take to be a process of working metalliferous minerals by great skill and machinery; but to call this simple process of washing sand and gravel mining is absurd: they might as well designate ordinary gravel-pits mines, and propose that scientific engineers should superintend the loading of the carts.

Seeing that there was no water in the creek to wash the gold-earth, the diggers were necessitated to cart it to the Loddon river, distant about three miles. In this case they were obliged to pay separately for carting it; for which they were charged fifteen shillings per load. It was put into bags for this purpose, which were carefully emptied at the washing-ground. This nearness to the Loddon is a great advantage to the diggers upon Friar's Creek. That river is a beautiful clear running stream, the water of which is excellent. And there was even at that dry season plenty of good grass for horses and cattle, which was very much required at Forest Creek. The scenery upon the banks of the stream at this spot was of that quiet, park-like aspect which characterises the sheep-runs in the vicinity of this golden mount. To us it was a pleasing relief to the parched appearance of the gullies—as the small valleys are termed in Australia—in and around Friar's Creek, and its neighbour Forest Creek. But to the gold-digger it appeared a perfect El Dorado, where he had such abundance of water at command to wash the auriferous soil. And so they went joyfully to work, singing, talking, and laughing as they rocked their cradles by the margin of that murmuring stream. There was more of the romance of gold-digging upon this spot than any where we had yet visited.

We presume that every one who has taken up this book, and read thus far, has become acquainted with the ordinary method of gold-washing in Australia:—that the earth which contains the gold is dug out by one man, and

pitched on the side of the hole, when they have to excavate for it; from whence it is carried by another man to the cradle, which is generally some distance from the excavation, and handy to the water. Here it is thrown into the washing-machine, which is now well known to resemble an ordinary child's cradle, and there mingled with copious supplies of water, thrown on by a third member of the party; while a fourth rocks the cradle violently by a handle attached to one side near the head: unlike the gentle soothing motions which watchful nurses apply to that piece of nursery furniture just named; for it is not the purpose of the gold-seeker to lull the contents of his cradle to rest, but to wake it up. When a sufficient quantity of earth is washed in this manner, to satisfy the cradle-rocker that there is a likelihood of some gold being found in the bottom of the cradle—where it settles in consequence of its greater density, while the particles of earth with which it is mixed are carried off—the residue is taken out and washed in a tin dish to clear it from any sand or gravel still left, when the gold-dust is carefully collected. The larger pieces—or nuggets as they are termed—are picked out before the mass of earth reaches the bottom of the cradle; as there are generally one or two gratings at the head of the machine to intercept the stones which are mingled with the earth. To furnish the intending gold-digger with more valuable practical information on this head, we subjoin here some memoranda carefully drawn up from the statement of a successful and intelligent digger, a Lancashire man, named W. B. Garrett. And as these gold-diggings at Mount Alexander have been so much spoken of, perhaps they will be interesting to the general reader, as they are couched in language so as to be understood by all classes.

Mr. Garrett says: "At the surface-diggings the gold is found lying on the very top, to the depth of from 6 to 14 inches, and sometimes still deeper; these diggings have always been on the face or side of the hills, and generally those hills facing east and south-east. It is found in all sorts of earth, excepting the black alluvial soil, in or amongst gravelly earth, and small quartz, in hard marly clay. The average yield of this sort of diggings is about an

ounce to a cart-load of earth, and three men with a cradle can dig up and wash six or seven loads per day: it was this sort of diggings that a party of three, to which I belonged, obtained in eleven days 37 ozs. 2 dwts. each. But some of the surface-diggings yield much more. In some particular spots, parties of three or four have obtained 300, 400, and 500, and even in one instance 800 ounces in two or three days; but taking them altogether, they yield about an ounce to a load of earth.

"In sinking, the deepest of the holes might be eighteen or twenty feet, certainly not deeper, and the shallowest two, three, and four feet, so that the average would be about eight or ten feet. As they keep sinking, they try a dishful of the earth occasionally, until they find that it will pay for washing. They frequently find a few particles from within a couple of feet from the top. But they in general have to go within a foot of the rock before they find it to pay them; it is then found sometimes in a hard marly substance. The rocks, which are mostly blue or grey slate, are in general covered with a few inches of tough clay, in which gold is seldom or ever found. But on the top of the clay a bed of small gravel is found, in which gold most abounds (the larger pieces are often embedded in the clay). I have known many holes yielding an ounce per day to three men abandoned as not paying, and given to new comers, who wanted a start; and the men generally considered themselves not paid if they were getting less than an ounce per day each man. Many holes have been left by parties just commencing as being unprofitable, through not knowing how to work them; and others, experienced hands, have gone into the same hole and done well. Myself and two others went into an old hole abandoned by two parties, and in about a fortnight got six pounds seven ounces each man, driving our hole under three or four others that had not been sunk down to the rocks. The sinking is always done in the gullies. Holes in the very centre of the dip of the gullies are always the richest. Quartz abounds in nearly every part of the gold-fields, sometimes lying scattered on the surface; and in many places large ridges of it are found sticking up out of the ground, forming an angle with the earth of about 40° or

45°. In many places there are alternate layers of iron-stone and quartz embedded together. The iron-stone abounds most in and near the bed of the creek, where it is found in immense blocks. The gold found amongst the iron-stone in and near the creek is often in large pieces, and much water-worn. Specimens of gold and iron-stone have been found completely amalgamated (a small one of which sort we possess). The scarcity of water towards the latter end of the summer is much felt (the dirt which is taken to the creek in large quantities for washing absorbs it); and as water fails in the upper part of the creek, the diggers move down towards the river Loddon.

"The season for digging is about October to January, when the water will fail until May, the beginning of winter, or rainy season.

"The diggers, as a body of men, were remarkably healthy; the only disease at all prevalent was the blight, or disease of the eye caused by the flies, which in all parts of Australia, are a complete nuisance.

"All the gold I have seen—and I have seen a great deal—has the appearance (colour excepted) that lead would have, if it was spilt or scattered in a molten state. Some few grains are found quite globular or round, some in very fine dust, some in thin scales, and much in partially flattened pieces of all shapes and sizes; all, except the first, having the rough appearance which new-cast metals have that have been cast in sand. The gold found in the water-courses, or in those places where water-courses formerly were, is, of course, more or less smooth or water-worn; and that found on the sides of the hills, in what they call the surface-diggings, is invariably the roughest, as having been least exposed to friction, never having been in the water-courses.

"The colour of the gold is of different appearance in different localities. All the gold procured in Victoria is of a beautiful pale yellow, though not so pale as the Californian gold, having no silver in it."

From what we gathered from other sources during our rambles about these prolific golden creeks, we consider the foregoing description and statements to be faithful and accurate. In fact, however small a quantity was collected

by those termed unlucky, there was no man said to have left Mount Alexander, out of the tens of thousands who had congregated there, without having some gold in his pocket over and above paying expenses. So that although we have considered the pursuit of gold-digging as having much of a lottery in its nature, still it is not a lottery with few prizes and many blanks. It may be compared with more justice to an Art-union raffle, where, besides the chances of a valuable prize-picture, every member is entitled to a print worth the value of his subscription. In like manner, the gold-labourers at Mount Alexander, besides the chances of a hundredweight of prize-nuggets, may obtain by dint of perseverance an equivalent for the time and labour expended on the employment. What a hopeful country this Australia is for the able-bodied and industrious man! On every side labour is rewarded beyond all calculations in the Old World. Here there is no figurative speaking, but the literal fact stares us in the face, that gold may be had for the gathering. This is no Dick-Whittington story; for the stripling of fifteen we have seen picking it up in handfuls, while the rude labourer with his brawny arms and ten fingers has gathered it in heaps as no man hath done before.

CHAPTER VI.

A SHEEP-STATION.

Start upon our mission—The bush of Australia—Australian forest scenery—Birds and insects—An Australian shepherd—The shepherd *versus* the gold-digger—Description of an out-station—Duties of a shepherd and hut-keeper—System of sheep-farming in Australia—Bush tracks and roads—A Squatter's homestead—Character of the Squatters—Effect of the gold discovery upon the pastoral interests—Early struggles of a Squatter—His apprenticeship—Progress of a sheep-station—Difference between English and Australian sheep-farming—Advice to intending Squatters—Advantages of a cattle-station—Sheep-shearing—Wool-packing—Reflections.

Now that we had witnessed to our satisfaction the great fact of the gold-discovery in Australia, by seeing the colonists digging up and washing the particles of gold from the earth before our eyes, we bade our friends in the valley good-bye, wishing them every success in their burrowings for the coveted metal. Nor was it with feelings of regret that we turned our horse's head away from the noise and dust of that canvass Babel on the golden mount, and directed his steps towards the verdant pastures of the surrounding country. At the same time we confess that, had we been free to act, we most assuredly would have entered into the speculation in a methodical manner; but we had a duty to perform which rendered that out of the question. And as that duty led us subsequently to examine carefully some of the largest pastoral and agricultural farms in both of these gold-yielding colonies, besides enabling us to visit the diggings in New South Wales, we had opportunities of forming an impartial opinion of the condition of the country, and judging of the conduct of its inhabitants, which rarely falls to the lot of travellers in a newly-settled country like Australia. In undertaking the journey we were no stranger to the exigencies of a bush life, having

experienced its roughings many years previous to our leaving England upon this occasion, in the colonies of Western Australia and Van Diemen's Land, South Australia and New Zealand. Under the circumstances, therefore, we may be considered to have re-visited Australia, which, we trust, will give additional weight to our judgment of passing scenes and events. So, with perfect confidence in our old acquired skill as "bushmen," we struck off the main road as soon as we got out of the Forest Creek valley, and plunged into the wide-spreading bush of Australia, our immediate purpose being to visit a sheep-station some twelve miles distant from the golden mount.

The term "bush," as it is used in Australia, is indiscriminately applied to all descriptions of uncleared land, or to any spot away from a settlement, as a person in England would speak of the country when they are out of town. The general character of the bush we were at this time journeying through was typical of a great portion of the pastoral lands of Victoria. It consisted of undulating open forest-land, which has often been compared, without exaggeration, to the ordinary park-scenery of an English domain; the only difference which strikes the eye forcibly being the dead half-burnt trees lying about. To bring it home to the comprehension of a Londoner, these open forest-lands have very much the appearance of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, presenting natural open glades like the east end of the former, and frequently gladdening the eyes of the thirsty traveller with a glimpse of such small sheets of water as the Serpentine, to which the colonists apply the homely term of "water-hole." At the same time it must not be supposed that the foliage of the trees in Australia has that luxuriant appearance presented by the elm, the beech, or the sycamore, which shade the sun's rays from the traveller like a canopy on passing below them. On the contrary, although the Australian gum-trees are not to be surpassed in height by the noblest giants of the northern woods, yet their leaves are few and scanty, while they hang from the branches with their edges upwards, both sides of the leaf being the same, like the mistletoe-leaf; hence the sun's rays are but slightly screened from above, imparting a peculiar light to Australian forest-

scenery, which artists have found it difficult to copy. Of course it is known to the most superficial observer that the European trees just named have their leaves fixed horizontally on the branches, and that the upper side of each leaf is different from the under. When light therefore enters a forest with this description of foliage, it comes sideways, as it were, like that from an ordinary window into a room; whereas in the other it descends from above, like the light from a cupola. Besides this peculiar structure of the foliage, those trees are perennial evergreens, there is no fall of the leaf in autumn, no denudation of the branches in winter, and no budding in spring; throughout all seasons their foliage is the same. But as if nature must have a renewal and decay annually, the old bark peels off as a new one grows, the former hanging in long dry shreds from the trunks of the trees. When it is considered that nine out of every ten acres of bush-land in Australia is more or less covered with this description of timber, you can imagine the interminable region of the bush, its monotonous scenery, its confined views of the surrounding country. From the deepest ravine to the highest mountain-top those gum-trees rear unscathed their iron arms. Over thousands of miles of hill and dale have those everlasting trees met our wearied gaze. In the cleared lands of Europe the traveller can see at a glance the varied landscape of mountain and valley; but in the bush of Australia he can only catch occasional glimpses of the distant country, when he is ascending or descending a hill.

Through this description of forest-land we pursued our way pleasantly. The day was clear and sunny, such as you can find in Australia two hundred out of the three hundred and sixty-five. As we cantered along the bush track, the riding was smooth and agreeable, and the road felt soft and easy for the horse's feet. Every now and then we scared flocks of the ground-parakeet, feeding by the way-side as plentifully as sparrows in England, many of them not much larger, and all of the most brilliant plumage; while overhead the larger parrots and cockatoos were wheeling round and round amongst the trees, and breaking the stillness of the forest with their harsh and unmusical screams. The gorgeous livery of these fea-

thered denizens of the Australian bush are now familiar to the many; but this is surpassed by the splendour of the insect creation. As we brushed past a thicket of shrubs in blossom, a cloud of butterflies and beetles on the wing would dazzle in the sunbeams like a shower of gems, and then settle on the honied sweets of flowers scarcely less brilliant in hue. Every where—around, above, and below—were objects to feast the sense of sight upon.

After a two hours' smart ride we entered a quiet glade, through which ran a small clear brook. As we stopped to allow our horse to moisten his lips, and take a draught of the cooling beverage ourselves, we heard in the distance the tinkling of a sheep-bell. Guided by the sound, we soon came on a flock of sheep quietly feeding on the brow of a hill. At a short distance from them stood the shepherd, tranquilly smoking his pipe, and attending to his charge, as if there was no such thing as a gold-mine within many thousand miles. As we approached him at a walking pace, we could not but contemplate his peaceful occupation, so much in accordance with the stillness of the Australian wilderness, and forming a contrast to the turmoil and labours of the gold-diggers whom we had just left. And yet an Australian shepherd is no gentle prim-clad Lubin, as described in the old pastorals, sitting with his crook and pipe, beguiling the fleeting hours by chanting some tuneful lay; more frequently you find him a long-bearded bronze-featured "crawler," as he is termed in the colony, clad in a blue serge shirt, fastened round the waist by a broad leather belt, with probably a pistol stuck into it; a musket over his shoulder instead of a crook, and smoking a short black pipe in lieu of trilling the musical reed.

Upon inquiry we found that this flock of sheep belonged to the settler to whose station we were then proceeding; and the shepherd himself was one of his oldest servants, who had remained with him in spite of the great attractions of the diggings. He was a married man, his wife acting as hut-keeper. He had charge of a large flock of 3000 sheep which had formerly been two flocks, but his mate had left and gone to the diggings. As an inducement for him to remain, his master had doubled his wages, and he was then receiving fifty pounds a year, besides

rations for himself, his wife, and four children. He was very civil; and in directing us towards the head station, advised us to call at his hut, which was on the way, and get a bit of damper and a pot of tea. This we were nothing loath to do, as our breakfast off the gritty chops and damper at the diggings had been sparing. Half an hour's jog-trot brought us to the out-station, which was delightfully situated on the margin of a brook. We were kindly received by the shepherd's wife, who was just getting ready the mid-day meal; at her invitation we dismounted and entered the hut. Here we found every thing snug and tidy, and the cheerful faces of four happy children. As we partook of the wholesome bush-fare of mutton, tea, and damper, with some smiling potatoes and cabbage added, we could not help recurring again to our comparison of the two occupations of the shepherd and the gold-digger; and we decided once more in favour of the former. Of course, we were biassed in the decision, because at the time we were hungry. At the same time, good master emigrant, take our word for it, if you are a married man, you will find pastoral employment not only more congenial to your habits, but probably in the end find the certain wages of the one more than equal the chances of the other. And if you value social and domestic felicity, the shepherd has always a quiet home for his wife and children, besides an ample supply of house-comforts and necessaries; whereas the gold-digger, with all his chances of fortune, finds a subsistence precarious and uncomfortable, and the pleasures of the domestic circle cannot be nurtured on the rugged mountain side, where his labour lies.

After our meal was finished we took a stroll round this out-station, to have some notion of the manner in which sheep-farming is conducted in Australia. And as we afterwards found that such a station was a type of all others throughout these colonies, and the whole system of sheep-farming was merely a multiplication of the same, we shall here note our observations for the information of the reader. An out-station is simply a hut built at a convenient distance from the homestead, or from any other out-station on the "run" or sheep-walk, so as to allow ample feeding-ground for two flocks of sheep. A flock of

sheep averages 1500 head; and three acres of pasture-land are allowed to each sheep. An out-station, therefore, commands 9000 acres more or less of pasture-land. To each flock there is a shepherd, and to every two shepherds a hut-keeper, all of whom find accommodation in the hut; while the sheep are yarded every night in hurdle yards close to the hut; the entire arrangement and conduct of the station being distinct within itself, and having no connexion with any other out-station. The business of the shepherd is to proceed with his flock every day, Sundays not excepted, soon after sunrise, to the feeding-ground pointed out to him by the overseer, with strict injunctions not to encroach upon a neighbour's run, or to pass the bounds of his out-station; and to see that they feed at their leisure, and be well spread over the ground while feeding. By noon they travel in this manner a distance of four or five miles, when they are brought to rest under the shade of some trees, to shelter them as much as possible from the mid-day sun, which they feel oppressive in consequence of their heavy fleeces. This rest gives the shepherd an opportunity of eating his dinner, which he carries with him, besides his pots to make tea in, the universal beverage of the bushmen. A few minutes suffice to light a fire and boil the water; tea is soon made, four or five chops are spitted on cleft sticks and grilled before the fire, a piece of damper is taken out of his wallet, and the shepherd has his fill of good bush fare, mutton, damper, and tea. This finished, he winds up his repast with a pipe of tobacco, by way of dessert. After an hour or so has elapsed he resumes his task, rouses the sheep, and returns to the hut by a different route, so that they may have fresh pasture on their way back to the yards. He reaches the out-station about sun-down, where he meets his fellow-shepherd returning with his flock from an opposite direction. Each then drives his flock into a separate yard, formed by hurdles; and if they are careful men, they count the sheep as they go in, to see if any are missing, for which they are responsible. The labours of the day are now over for the shepherd, and he sits down to a hearty supper, ready prepared for him by the hut-keeper. This latter personage takes charge of the sheep during the night, when he acts in

the capacity of watchman, to guard them from the attacks of the native dogs. For this purpose he is armed with a musket, and sleeps in a movable watch-box, which is carried about by hand-spokes, like a sedan-chair, and placed close beside the sheep-yards. When the morning sun peeps out, he awakes the shepherds, to whom he resigns his charge for the day. He then lights the fire and makes breakfast ready. After the shepherds depart he sweeps out the yards, if they are fixed, or shifts the hurdles if they are movable. This over, he puts on his meat to boil, and bakes the far-famed damper. By the time the flocks return in the evening, he has every thing snug, and supper ready for the shepherds, as he had the day before. This routine at an out-station is continued daily without variation during the year, until shearing time comes, when the flocks are driven to the wool-shed; also when the rams are put to the flocks, and at the lambing season, when the presence of the master or superintendent is required, to see that the men perform their duties faithfully.

From this rough sketch of the management of an out-station we can easily trace the ramifications of the entire system of sheep-farming throughout Australia. A run or squatting station is composed of a number of these out-stations surrounding the homestead at distances of four or five miles from each other, where it is good pasture-land; so that when you hear of a squatter being possessed of twenty or thirty thousand sheep, you do not see them all on his run at one spot, but in detached flocks, as we have described. And it is the duty of the overseer, or of the squatter himself, to visit these out-stations occasionally, and issue their rations to them either every week or fortnight.

Suppose then, for the sake of illustration, that an out-station possesses 3000 sheep, and that there are on an average three of these on every run, giving 9000 sheep to each squatting station, and that there are one hundred squatting stations in a district, mustering 900,000 sheep, and that each colony has ten districts, this will give us eighteen millions of sheep for the two provinces of Victoria and New South Wales, which is near the total amount, according to the last returns. For every 4000 sheep depastured on

crown lands, the settler pays a yearly squatting license of ten pounds to the government.

After thanking the honest woman for her entertainment, we mounted our horses, and pursued our journey towards the head station, about eight miles distant. The track at some places was rather indistinct, from the grass having grown over it, which made us proceed cautiously, as we had no idea of losing ourselves in the bush, or encountering unnecessary dangers from want of prudence—a common circumstance with strangers on their first travels through such solitary regions. In this manner, and from a stubborn self-confidence, which ignorant men display, many have lost their lives in the Australian wilderness. Fool-hardy people often encounter dangers which the bravest would shrink from, simply because they are ignorant of the consequences. At that time we heard of many who undertook journeys to the diggings of several hundred miles, who never had travelled ten miles beyond a township before. And the wonder was, not that they encountered so many privations, but that they ever reached their destinations. While others, who were unaccustomed to the ordinary hardships of the bush, wrote letters to their friends, which appeared in the public prints at home, describing the dangers they encountered, and the hardships they had to put up with, which any bush traveller would have laughed at. In none of the Australian colonies are the bush-tracks, or natural roads, so good as they are in Victoria. Had it not possessed the extent of undulating prairie and open forest-land which it does, with so few mountain-chains to obstruct the progress of the settler, it would never have become so rapidly peopled by a pastoral population as it has been, who, in the course of ten years after its settlement, occupied all the available pasture-land with their flocks and herds within its territory, simply because they had good tracks through the country to the ports of shipment for their wool and tallow.

As we approached the homestead we heard the lowing of kine, the bleating of sheep, and the homely bark of the dogs, which thrilled with a pleasing sensation through our wearied frame, while our good horse pricked up his ears and sniffed the air, as if he was sure there was a feed of

corn at hand. Emerging from the forest, we came suddenly upon the head-station, with its house and out-offices built upon a small hill, at the foot of which was a running stream about ten yards wide; this stream we forded over a pebbly bed, with the horse up to his knees in water. A general whoop from all the live creation about announced our approach. Among barking dogs, crowing fowls, cackling geese, lowing cattle, and neighing horses, we made our way up to the house, where we found the proprietor standing at his open door, who cordially invited us to dismount and step in, after perusing a note of introduction which we presented to him from his agents in Melbourne.

Apologising for the absence of his ostler, who had gone to the diggings, he led the way to a roughly-built but comfortable stable in the rear of the premises, where, between us, we managed to put up our tired horse snugly for the night. After this he shewed us to the strangers' bed-rooms, of which there were half-a-dozen in the house, and left us to indulge in refreshing ablutions, which, under the circumstances, was the most agreeable thing we could have. When we had finished, we were shewn into a comfortably furnished parlour, where we were introduced to our host's wife, a lady-like personage, and his family, consisting of four boys and two interesting girls, all in their teens. Besides these, there were two gentlemen from a neighbouring station, who had come a distance of ten miles to drink tea with them. Altogether, a more homely, pleasant-looking family party you would not find in the oldest farm-house in England; and nowhere but in a gentleman-farmer's homestead would you find the same elegancies and comforts with which the room was furnished. Sofa, table, chairs, carpet, pianoforte, curtains decorating a French window opening upon a verandah,—every thing had the semblance of wealth and taste, which you might expect in the cities, but certainly not in the bush of Australia. Our host, although more than twelve years a tenant of the bush, had not lost any of the polished manners of the gentleman; and his children, brought up under the care of an amiable and accomplished mother, presented that decorum and obedience which betoken the well-bred family. Those who have read of the barbarous state in which the American

squatter lives, from whom the appellation has been derived, as he squats down upon a piece of land in the backwoods, without paying fee or license,—are agreeably surprised when they witness the superior condition of the Australian squatter. Nay, in comparing these gentlemen with the sheep-farmers and graziers of the mother country, to whom they are more nearly allied, we must give them the preference in point of education, and enterprise. This is not to be wondered at, however, when we inquire into the matter, for we find them composed principally of gentlemen who have retired from the learned and aristocratic professions. Doctors, lawyers, clergymen, military and naval officers, sons of wealthy merchants, who have gone with their savings or loans from the exchange or banking-houses, to invest in these colonial securities of sheep and cattle, as producing the staple commodities of wool and tallow, realising, with ordinary care and prudence, a safe and good interest for the money employed, besides filling up their time by a not unpleasing pursuit. Nine out of ten of these squatters are therefore merely amateur wool-growers and graziers men who never bred a ewe or an ox in their lives before they set foot in Australia. No doubt they have gleaned sufficient knowledge of cattle-breeding and sheep-farming from books and other sources, to pursue either occupation in these colonies, but very few of them have been regularly bred to the business. The fact is, that a knowledge of the management of live stock in Australia is so easily acquired, that any educated man possessed of common shrewdness may be qualified in the course of twelve months to superintend a sheep or cattle station. So that if you are desirous of establishing yourself as a squatter on the waste lands of Australia, it is of greater importance that you should go into the market with a heavy purse than with skill and experience.

Of course, the general topic of conversation was concerning this wonderful gold discovery, and the probable effects it would have upon the pastoral interest. Our host and his neighbours complained of the high wages they were obliged to give, and the scarcity of labour to carry on the general business of their stations. At the same time, from being in the vicinity of the richest gold-field in the colony,

they obtained more than recompensed them for these drawbacks, by the sale of their beef and mutton amongst the diggers. And luckily for them that the dry season at the diggings was the time of sheep-shearing throughout the colony, for they found no difficulty in getting shearers, although at an advance of one-half more wages than was given formerly. They were looking forward also to an extensive immigration from the mother country, to neutralise the effects of the absorption of so much labour. Meantime all were reducing their flocks and herds, by sending their surplus stock to the boiling-down pots.

Our conversation was interrupted by the appearance of tea, or rather supper; for although it is served up at six o'clock, it is the third and last meal of the day, and like the other two, there is always animal food served with it. Late suppers are scarcely ever indulged in, not even in the towns. Excepting the dish of hot savoury mutton-chops, the tea-table of our hostess was perfectly orthodox. In the way of cups and saucers it displayed the newest pattern. It is only at the rudest stations in the far interior that tin is used instead of crockery. Upon our expressing our surprise at the comforts and elegancies which surrounded our host, he said his was but a humble mansion compared to many others in the bush, especially in the older colony of New South Wales; and whatever merit it possessed on the score of comfort and elegance was attributable to his amiable partner, who was the presiding genius over the homestead; for his duties took him away to the rougher occupations of the station. "A sorry place indeed would it have been but for her," was his warm ejaculation as she left the room. "When we first settled down upon this spot it was a rough life for the hardiest man to encounter, yet she was not deterred from facing it, even with a young family around her, although she never had experienced what is called country life before. The cheerful countenance with which she toiled through the drudgery of domestic occupations, was what often spurred me on to greater exertion, that I might be able to build a better covering for her and my children than a bark gunya. To us bushmen these are the ministering angels to all our comforts; and you will agree with me when you visit a station where they are not.

To a bachelor a bush life is a solitary life at the best; and his mental culture does not improve in the way of refinement during a long absence from the society of his equals, as the case must necessarily be in our thinly-peopled wilderness; while the presence of a wife and family, so far away from the busy haunts of man, throws a halo of domestic comfort and felicity around the bushman's dwelling, which no other pleasure can supply."

These remarks, of course, led the theme of our conversation away entirely from the recent subject of gold, which engrossed so much of the public mind wherever we went; and it was a relief to hear an intelligent colonist like our entertainer revert to that pursuit which had raised these Australian colonies to their high position among the British dependencies. And as we were anxious to gain information regarding the commencement and progress of this lucrative pursuit, we took advantage of the open and candid manner in which this gentleman spoke, to elicit the following experiences. "Eleven years ago," he said, "I commenced the business of an Australian squatter, with four thousand sheep, for which I gave 4000*l.*, including the right of the run, and a few horses and bullocks, with a dray. This season I shall shear 30,000 sheep, and I have a thousand head of cattle, and a hundred horses, besides the improvements on the stations, as the reward of my exertions, and the natural increase of stock since that time. And if all things go well this year, I shall realise from twelve to fifteen hundred pounds clear profit from my wool and tallow. So much for the result; the manner I set to work at the beginning was to reside for a twelvemonth prior to my purchasing stock upon a station, where I gave my services free, to obtain a practical knowledge of the details of every employment necessary on a sheep-farm, by acting in the capacity of hut-keeper, shepherd, shearer, and overseer. In England I had been educated in, and practised the legal profession, and I never supposed that I should have taken so kindly to this rude occupation; but I am thankful now that I threw up the quill and the desk for the sheep-shears and the wool-press, for the life of a squatter has made a better man of me, both in mind and body. Instead of being a pale and slender ghost, flitting about the dingy courts of

law, earning nothing more than a living for myself and family, here I am, as you see, a stout able-bodied man, browned by the genial exposure to our glorious climate, and able to ride round my run, a distance of fifty miles, in six hours, while I am monarch of all I survey. You see there is not much mystery in this business here; nor is there a long period of apprenticeship required to become a proficient in the craft. After acquiring a general knowledge of sheep and cattle in the manner I have just related, you continue a careful supervision of your flocks, and the salubrity of the climate will do all the rest; for *it* is the prime agent in producing a fine growth of wool, as well as giving a large increase to your flocks. Without much care at the time of lambing, beyond ordinary watchfulness on the part of the shepherd, we obtain a hundred per cent of sheep annually, and grumble if it is between eighty and ninety. So rapid has been the increase throughout this group of colonies, that the hundred thousand ewes which depastured on the lands of New South Wales in 1820 have increased to upwards of twenty millions. From these circumstances you will suppose that there is a material difference between sheep-farming on our Australian prairies, and the same occupation on the English downs and Welsh and Scottish hills, where so much loss occurs from disease and rigorous climate. The precautions adopted by the shepherds on those bleak lands, to preserve the health and increase of their flocks and herds, are not necessary with us; neither do we require the long schooling and practical experience which the English sheep-farmers or graziers find it essential to learn to be proficient in their business. By them we are considered extremely careless and negligent of our stock; which we do not deny, not only on account of the dearth of labour amongst us, but the comparatively trifling loss it is to us when a sheep dies, worth at the most four or five shillings, while with them it would be forty or fifty. Seeing, therefore, that money and not professional experience is the grand *desideratum* in following the business of a squatter, we cannot promise adequate remuneration to men whose knowledge and skill have been expensively or laboriously acquired. We cannot, however anomalous it may appear, recommend this essentially pastoral country to the practical

and skilful man, unless he has plenty of means to invest in stock. Some of my brother-squatters go so far as to say that the practised shepherd and his master have to unlearn their old system before they can successfully follow the new. But this I do not admit; for I have always found emigrant herdsmen or shepherds up to their business at once, with the commendable quality of great carefulness towards their charge, which inexperienced men do not possess; while we have to thank our master-stockholders who have been sheep-farmers or graziers before for maintaining and improving the fine and pure breeds of sheep and cattle throughout the colony.

"From these remarks, my advice is more applicable to those gentlemen squatters in prospective, who have the necessary means to commence this lucrative pursuit. Less than 1500*l*., as a foundation, will render their progress up-hill work. Before purchasing either stock or station, I would recommend twelve months' colonial experience, should they intend to conduct operations personally on the farm. If, however, they delegate the management of their station to a superintendent, in whom they must have full confidence, then a few months' residence in the bush will be sufficient to initiate them into the life and business of the country. To those who are of young and sanguine temperaments, there is here a pleasing and delightful life before them; with a prospect of realising an independency by attention and industry. So free and self-dependent are its contingencies, that a species of romance seems to clothe the occupations of the bush. Such feelings, however, soon pass away before the stern realities of a squatter's life during the lambing and shearing seasons, the delinquencies of servants, and low returns from wool-sales. Then follows the monotony of inspecting the out-stations, which fills up the remainder of the year; and frequently the settler wishes himself back into the bustle of a town."

Here our host was interrupted by one of the other two gentlemen visitors, who possessed a cattle-station; and as he was a younger man, he spoke in more glowing terms of a bush life. "Although monotonous at times," he said, "yet still there is a pleasure unspeakable to the man of mental vigour, in the healthful exhilaration experienced by riding

through the silent forests, and over the smiling flowery plains, in the exercise of his bush duties, which not only reconciles him to his lot, but leads him to prefer it to a town life; especially if his sphere of action is on a cattle-station, where every thing is fraught with excitement, from the first occupation of the run to the branding of the increase annually. And if he is a lover of horse-flesh, with its attendant amusements, he will find no want of opportunities for gratifying his inclinations in this respect, at the same time rendering useful service. I will guarantee him as good sport in dingo-hunting as he would find in fox-hunting—in cattle-driving as much excitement as in following the hounds. In fine, to be the squatter *par excellence*, a man must be possessed of indomitable perseverance, with a good store of moral courage, and be to some extent a disciplinarian, so as to keep his men in check, and enforce order and regularity throughout his run; for it is upon these matters, and not by engrossing his time with calculations of profit and loss amongst his herds and flocks, that the successful management of a station depends. Taking all things into consideration, therefore, and notwithstanding the present temporary distress amongst us for want of labour, we can safely agree in stating, that as long as grass grows upon our undulating forest-lands, furnishing food for our beeves and flocks, so long will capital invested in our living streams of beef and mutton yield a steady and remunerating profit." In such instructive and agreeable conversation did we pass the evening until it was time to retire, and our host persuaded his two friends to remain until the morning. "Early to bed, and early to rise," is the bush-man's maxim: and the rest of the adage follows, according to our squatter friend's account.

Next morning we were up early, and joined our host in a ride before breakfast round the outskirts of his homestead. We were much surprised at the extent of ground he had fenced in for pasturing his horses and milch cows, which he informed us would not feed where sheep had been. The number of small huts clustered about the place also gave it much the appearance of a little country village,—which in fact it had been before the diggings began, but now most of the cottages were empty. Within the precincts of his house

and out-offices was a complete farm, with all its appurtenances. He grew as much wheat in his paddocks as supplied the station with flour, which was ground by hand in large steel mills. He reared an abundance of poultry upon maize, besides having sufficient for his horses and pigs. He cured hams and bacon, and made cheese and butter. In making the latter he had a commodious underground dairy to facilitate the operation of churning in the summer. Then he had a garden, where he grew fruit of many kinds, grapes, peaches, oranges, apples and pears, besides kitchen-garden stuffs, from a potato to a pumpkin. There was scarcely an article of dairy or farm produce but was raised on this spot, where twelve years before the poor starved aborigines could scarcely find a few roots of *murnong*. In fact, this enterprising settler was independent of supplies for the subsistence of his people, if they would have done without the foreign articles of tea and sugar. A peep into his store, where these and other luxuries and comforts were kept, was not the least interesting sight upon this little colony. Here was a regular shop in the middle of the bush, as tidily arranged, with its counter and scales, as any in the towns. Articles of every description were to be had within, from a tarpaulin to a lady's muslin dress, from a watch-guard to a bullock-chain.

After breakfast we all walked down to the washing-pool and wool-shed, to witness the operations of sheep-washing and sheep-shearing. It was a pleasant spot he had selected for the former; the stream had been dammed up where some shea-oak and flooded gum-trees lent their grateful shade from the powerful sunbeams. Across this pool half a dozen men stood up to their waists in the water, plunging the frightened sheep overhead, and sousing their fleeces until they became as white as snow, a gentle current carrying off the dirty water. In this manner they passed each animal from one to another until they crossed the pool, where they were landed upon a clean grassy paddock. Here they remained until the fleece dried, and the yolk or natural oil of the wool began to rise, after which they were considered to be ready for shearing. At a short distance from the washing-pool, situated upon the brow of a hill, stood the wool-shed, where the sheep are shorn. It was a large and commodious building of sawn timber, and capable of accommo-

dating 1500 sheep at a time. There were innumerable compartments and pens for separating the sheep before and after shearing; with tables and smooth floors for laying out the fleeces, and a powerful screw-press for packing the wool into bales. As we entered this spacious building we were much gratified at the scene before us. The bustle and excitement of the men and sheep, the shouts of the one and the struggles of the other, rendered it a most unusual scene on the generally quiet routine of a sheep-station. Here were the helpless animals possessed of their thick fleecy coverings, dragged along by the legs to a platform, where the shearer knelt down, and in the course of a few minutes deprived them of their coats with his formidable-looking shears, as easily as a man would undo his outer garment. And then the naked-looking sheep, piteously bleating, were started to their feet and driven into another pen, as unlike themselves as a dandy would be when stripped to the buff. The fleeces were then rolled up and put into a wool-pack within a strong iron-bound box, and subjected to great pressure under the screw-press. After this the packs were taken out and sewn up, each containing on an average 250 pounds weight of wool, and then branded with the initials of the proprietor, besides the quantity and quality of each bale. They were then rolled into the wool-store ready to be taken by the bullock-drays to the ship. And it was a satisfactory sight to our enterprising host to witness the goodly array of bales heaped up in that part of the wool-shed, considering the difficulty of obtaining extra hands for shearing.

We reluctantly took our departure from the station of this hospitable squatter; but as we had resolved on accompanying his two neighbours, to have a peep at their cattle-station on our way back to Melbourne, we thought it most advisable to proceed with them that day on their return. As we lingered over the last glimpse of that pleasant spot, and watched the blue curling smoke fade amongst the trees, we could not imagine it to have been so recently settled. An air of occupation floated around that human oasis in the wilderness, which seemed to stamp its existence from all time. The primitive character of many things about it also seemed to link it with the past; a remnant, as it were, remaining of the patriarchs of old, who tended their flocks on Judea's

plains: the rude bullock-yoke, and the unleavened bread, appeared vestiges of that by-gone time. We could scarcely suppose it to be connected with the civilised, the railway, the electric-telegraph world of the present age. And yet part of those fleecy treasures we had just seen shorn from the Australian sheep's back are probably now flaunting through the streets of some gay metropolis.

CHAPTER VII.

A CATTLE-STATION.

Physical appearance of the male population—The gentleman squatter—A bushman's qualifications—Cattle pastures—Indigenous grasses—A herd of cattle—Cattle-driving—The squatter's home—Comforts of smoking—Boiling down the order of the day—Value of cattle and sheep—Agricultural farms—Return to Melbourne.

THE two gentlemen with whom we were now travelling were the very *beau ideal* of the Australian squatter. They were both muscular men, about six feet high, between thirty and thirty-five years of age, with clear healthy complexions embrowned by exposure to the sun and air. They were dressed in strong shooting-jackets, their trousers were lined outside with leather, and fastened round the waist with a belt; each had a cabbage-tree hat on, and wielded a stock-whip in his right hand. Altogether, as they sat upon their high-mettled chargers, they exhibited in their persons much manly grace, and shewed in their countenances evidences of the salubrity of the climate.

During the whole of our travels through this province of Victoria we were particularly struck with the smart and robust appearance of the men. And as they constitute more than two-thirds of the adult population of the colony, we shall here note a few remarks for the special information of our fair countrywomen who are inclined to take a trip to the antipodes. Although the motley population at the diggings, and the shepherds, stockmen, bullock-drivers, and other members of the tribe of bushmen whom you encounter in the interior, present a rough and somewhat uncouth aspect, yet they exhibit more manliness of deportment than you will find amongst the peasantry of the most favoured localities in Great Britain or Ireland. We seldom observed that loutishness which so strongly marks

the English labourer, or that sullenness which stamps the Scottish farm-servant, and certainly none of that whining servility which often disgraces the manners of the "finest pisantry in the world."

Again, we saw scarcely any lame or deformed men in the colony, while their average stature appeared to be about that of our regiments of the line. At public meetings, at the diggings and elsewhere, which we attended, when there were many thousands assembled, we can safely state, that we saw more above this average than below it. And whatever objection we, as a nation of "shavers," can have to the growth of the beard and moustache, in our estimation, it adds greatly to the manly appearance of the Australian bushman. In the towns, however, all this is on the square; and there is no difference between the exterior of a Melbourne merchant, shopkeeper, or mechanic, and their prototypes in the old country, excepting that they are more frequently dressed in light clothing, and occasionally substitute a palm-leaf or straw hat for the black "chimney-pot."

Our remarks, however, are more immediately applicable to the gentlemen-squatters of the colony. And as it happened on our return to Melbourne that it was the season of the year when they pay their annual visits to the city for the purpose of closing accounts with the storekeepers, we had the very best opportunities of seeing them together. In the streets, at the hotels, and on one occasion where nine-tenths of those in town were present, namely, the squatters' annual ball, our observations led us to conclude that there were fewer under five feet nine than above six feet. Generally speaking, they are well-proportioned men, seldom shewing any appearance of paunch, or inclination to obesity; vigorous and active while walking, with an upright carriage. They look like men who can stand fatigue, and every one seems perfectly at his ease on horseback. Although rough-riders, yet many shew a good seat; and you may frequently detect the training of the riding-school among them. Altogether, there are few communities in the mother-country where her sons can muster so much manly beauty as in the fair province of Victoria. Think of that, ye maidens, who pine away in single wretchedness,

the ripeness of your youthful charms, from no other cause than the obvious one, that your rightful mates have left their native shores for the more sunny and prosperous antipodes; while they in turn sigh for your presence, when fortune has smiled upon their exertions. Meet the disparity of sexes there by following in their footsteps, despite the ill-natured remarks of your old-maiden sisters.

Under the guidance of our fellow-travellers, who knew every hill and valley as familiarly as a cockney knows the streets and buildings in the city of London, we made across the country away from all beaten tracks. Now skirting some open plain, anon riding along broken ridges, and down again by the margin of streams, where the yellow tassels of the wattle-trees sent forth their delicious fragrance. To the lover of nature in her pristine beauty there is a charm unspeakable in traversing these solitudes, especially if the mind has been schooled in the study of the physical sciences; for in this region you are surrounded by a Flora and Fauna unsurpassed in novelty and beauty by any other spot in the world; and we have but to point to the late discoveries of universal wealth to shew the interesting field presented to the geologist in its unexplored mountain-chains. Although the experienced bushman is seldom conversant with the scientific details of those studies in natural history, yet few men possess a more practical knowledge of physical geography than they do. It comes intuitive to some men; and it is surprising to see with what facility they will thread their way through what appears to be a perfect labyrinth of hills and trees, for miles and miles, arriving at their destination with the greatest accuracy.

Although habitations are few and far between in these thinly-peopled regions, still you are now and then reminded of its occupation by civilised men from meeting in your journey herds and flocks of those gregarious animals which form the wealth of a pastoral country. We had not left the well-cropped pastures of the sheep-farmer above a mile or so behind, when we entered the cattle-run of his neighbours, our companions. Here the grass was more luxuriant than on the run we had left. In many places, where the cattle had not been grazing, it was up to our

saddle-girths. Although it looked dry and brown, we were told that it had lost none of its fattening qualities; and frequently the poorer settlers mowed it down, and obtained a good price for it as bush hay. It is a fact worth recording, that all the Australian grasses are peculiarly adapted to the aridity of the climate; not one of which are indigenous in Europe. And although the European grasses succeed in the humid climate of New Zealand, they cannot survive the summer in Australia, nor take root upon its dry soil. This may be accounted for by the former possessing a pith, like a rush, in the stem, which probably retains the nourishing properties of the plant during the heat of summer; while the latter, being hollow-stemmed, shrivel up with the scorching heat.

As we descended by a rocky path upon an extensive flat, surrounded by trees, we roused a noble herd of cattle from their feeding. The sight was animating in the extreme, compared with the usual monotony of the bush. The startled animals bounded and gambolled about with all the activity and wildness presented by a herd of bisons in the American prairies; while their homely brown and white colours transformed the scene into an English meadow. This was a mixed herd of cattle, or as the squatters call them, a "mob" of two hundred head, which had been bred upon this particular part of the run. And as a sheep-station is composed of a series of out-stations, with separate flocks, so a cattle-station comprises within its bounds several distinct feeding-grounds, where the cattle are bred. From a strong natural instinct, they never travel beyond this boundary of themselves; and if a herd is sold, it is a difficult matter to keep them away from it. Neither do they require that constant attendance which the shepherds have to pay to their flocks; hence there are not so many men required on a cattle-station as upon a sheep-station. Consequently, in these gold-digging times, when labour is so scarce, the grazier-squatters suffer much less than their sheep-farming brethren. One mounted herdsman, or stockman as he is termed in the colony, is sufficient to look after a thousand head of cattle; and it is a good sized station which can muster five thousand head.

From this "mob" our friends selected a fat bullock,

to be driven to the shambles at the homestead. And as it was not an easy matter to draught him singly from the herd, they were obliged to drive two cows along with him. To effect this cleverly, they made a dash in amongst them where he was standing, cracking their long lasso-like stock-whips round their heads and flanks, and shouting all the while, until they set the whole herd in motion. Suddenly, and with great expertness, they turned upon the devoted bullock and the two cows, and checked their progress by a cut or two over their flanks with the electrifying lash, when off they set in an opposite direction towards the head station. We followed in the best manner we could, and assisted in preventing them escaping back to the herd. It was break-neck work, however; for they set off at a good round pace, crashing through the brushwood and leaping over dead trees, whither we had to follow like hunters at a steeple-chase, every now and then expecting to be unseated by the overhanging branches, or stunned by a blow from them. In this manner we made our descent helter-skelter upon the homestead, driving the condemned animal safely into the yard, and allowing the two cows to return to the herd, which they soon did by starting straight back. As it was near the close of day no time was lost in slaughtering the ox, which was speedily accomplished by shooting him in the forehead; and in half an hour afterwards he was skinned and hoisted up to the gallows, where the meat was allowed to cool during the night. So rapidly does decomposition commence in the summer season, that most of the animal would have been lost if slaughtered in the day-time, unless cut up and salted on the instant. Therefore, to enjoy a piece of fresh beef, the settlers have to butcher over night. So essential is it to have a knowledge of this rough business in the bush, that almost every settler can kill and skin an ox or sheep.

By the time this necessary operation had been gone through, it was dark, so we had no time to survey the position of the homestead. As we crossed a tolerably large garden in front of the cottage, however, we could discern sufficient of that building to see that it had some pretensions to architectural beauty. It was built in the Swiss-cottage style, and looked more like a habitation in the old country

than any we had yet seen in the interior. This impression was heightened as we crossed the spacious verandah in front, and peeped through the latticed window. Inside we saw, by the light of a candle, a large and airy apartment built of some dark native wood. It was rough certainly in finish, with the rafters and shingles visible, but then it was lofty, and these gave it effect; while an ancient-looking chimney-piece and well-filled bookcase, neatly carved, threw a character into the room which reminded us of those studios represented by the old Flemish artists. The good cheer we afterwards partook of within kept up the favourable impression we had of the house; and it required a great stretch of imagination for us to consider these gentlemen to be denizens of the wilds of Australia and this their habitation, when we looked around on so many comforts, and quaffed a glass of excellent native-grown wine after supper. At the same time we brought to recollection the remarks of our friend the previous night, when discussing the advantages of the married state to the squatter. There was the absence of the fairy hand of woman about the hut. Our entertainers were bachelors. Instead of seeing those pleasing ornaments of her industry which decorate the humblest domicile, there was a motley assemblage of spurs, whips, tobacco and pipes upon the mantel-shelf.

The latter articles were brought into requisition in true bushman style. This universal practice of smoking in Australia gives a dash of the American character to the habits of the people. Although you rarely find them chewing the weed, yet they smoke the strongest Negrohead and Cavendish. Every man and boy in the bush smokes. Morning, noon, and night, you are sure to find the bushman with his pipe in his cheek after meals. He says, at breakfast it helps him to swallow his damper; at dinner it assists the digestion of the mutton; and at supper it acts as a soporific against the astringent properties of the tea; besides sundry pipefuls he smokes during the intervals, for which he has no other excuse than that it fills up the time. Herein lies the great incentive; for we are certain that it is undeniably the pleasantest mode of idling away one's time that we know of in the bush. The complacency with which a regular bushman sits down to cut his tobacco, rub it, fill his

pipe, and light it with a red ember from the wood-fire, and then draw the long whiffs from his short pipe, is not surpassed by the greatest smoke-loving people in the world,—not excepting the Germans.

We spent all the next day at this hospitable station, and we were much pleased with the complete arrangements on the premises for conducting all dairy operations. Here was a large underground dairy, which is indispensable for churning butter in the summer. Fortunately for them, women were more useful in these matters than men. Consequently they did not suffer so much as their neighbours by the *male* exodus to the Mount; for they retained the wives when the husbands left, and with them they managed to carry on the business of the dairy. But they had had great difficulty in drafting their annual increase of fat bullocks from the herds, from which they derive the principal returns, in the shape of tallow and hides, by sending them down to the boiling-pots at Melbourne. Boiling-down was the order of the day amongst all the squatters. The times were such, that if the labour-market was not replenished by immigration, they would be forced to reduce their flocks and herds within the compass of what they could attend to by their own individual exertions, and the faithful few who remained with them. In the event of matters coming to this state, the proprietors of cattle-stations would suffer less than the sheep-farmers.

Although the process of boiling down sheep and cattle for the sake of their tallow, hides, skins, and horns, is now carried on to a great extent throughout these pastoral provinces, yet it is not seven years since the colonists first adopted this method of realising from their increase. When it was first proposed in 1845, it came almost in the shape of a discovery; now there are upwards of a hundred large boiling-down establishments in both these colonies, many of them erected at an expense of several thousand pounds; and the export of tallow now forms a considerable item in the products of the country. The fact is, that the export value of these commodities rules the market-price of both cattle and sheep now, instead of the former prices obtained for them, when new stations were being formed in this province and in South Australia. The days are past

when forty shillings a-piece would be given for ewes, and ten pounds for breeding-cows. This temporary nominal value gradually ceased, as the increase of stock occupied all the available pasture-lands of the country; and the settlers found that without feeding-ground to maintain their surplus stock, they were only worth what they would fetch out of the boiling-down pots. Hence, if they realise four or five shillings a-head for sheep, and twenty shillings a-head for cattle by this process, they consider these sums about their intrinsic value, which is now regulated by the account-sales of the above produce in the London market.

Taking leave of our hospitable entertainers, we once more vaulted into the saddle, and pursued our journey back to Melbourne. After a long day's ride we came into the main road a little before we reached the Mooneemoonee ponds, having made a detour from the Mount Alexander road of more than seventy miles. The country in this vicinity is fine open land, with scarcely any trees upon it. In all directions you see post and rail fences, and exceedingly good arable land under cultivation. In many places the crops had been got in; but the great part, although cut, was still standing in the fields; and these were left to be housed as they could by the women and children. If such was the case now in harvest-time, who were to sow the next crop and till the ground? People began to ask one another, Where will all this end? The answer was, Immigration will put all right again. That, however, is to be proved. In the meantime the industry of the country is suffering; and the people were giving high prices for grain and flour to the American and Van Diemen's Land traders. Those who were prudent enough to follow the steady occupation of farming turned more gold into their pockets than the average run of diggers; for all must eat, whatever betide.

It is surprising to see the abundance of tillage-land upon the alluvial flats of the streams in this province ready for the plough, without much trouble or expense required in clearing. And although there are not so many extensive farms under cultivation as may be found in the elder colony, nor such high-class farming pursued, still they grow as heavy crops on the virgin soil of the country.

The bush-farmers are not over particular in ploughing in mathematically straight furrows, or having trim hedges to enclose their fields. A brushwood or log-fence serves the purpose of a hedge well enough; and frequently the furrows wind round the stump of a tree without offending the eye. Utility before elegance is the Australian ploughman's motto. The fact is, that the rich and deep alluvial deposits selected for agricultural purposes from these broad lands are so strongly impregnated with natural manure, that they require little more than a mere scratching upon the surface with the plough and harrow to yield a crop of some thirty or forty bushels of wheat to the acre. Season after season the seed is roughly thrown into the soil, without adding manure. Crop after crop is reaped in this fashion, until the land is impoverished; and then the bush-farmer seeks a new patch of ground. Of course this is the rudest method of cultivation practised in the colony; and we mention it to shew the superior quality of the soil in Australia, which has been questioned, rather than the general system of culture adopted throughout the country. Of these others we shall have occasion to speak when the recital of our travels leads us into the neighbouring colony of New South Wales. The old farm-steadings there, and the system of cultivation, will vie with the best in England, not only for average abundance of crop, but in their trim enclosures, straight furrows, and farmer-like appurtenances. Still, in these times, the bush-paddock has a preference; for the expense of thorough clearing, and other improvements, is so much greater, that it leaves a small margin for profit. Farming on a large scale has not succeeded in Victoria. It is the small operative farmer working on his own freehold, or standing under a small rent or improving lease, who reaps the most profitable crop, provided he can conduct the operations of the farm with the labour of his family. And now is the time for such families to house a truly golden harvest from their combined exertions, if possessed of a small share of the needful to begin with. The market for their produce is just at their doors on the alluvial lands around Ballarat and Mount Alexander, where the hungry gold-diggers with heavy purses are their customers.

Both our horses and ourselves were pretty considerably fagged by the time we reached the outskirts of the town, which was in the dusk of the evening. And as we stopped at a comfortable-looking house of accommodation called the "Retreat Inn," we gladly put up there for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

MELBOURNE AND ITS ENVIRONS.

Approaches to Melbourne from the interior—Appearance of the city from elevated situations—Population and exports—Public and private buildings—Sketch of an Australian merchant's business—Hints to profit by—Shopkeepers and their large profits—Innkeepers and their customers—Necessity of maintaining temperate habits—The gold-diggers in town—Effects of the want of labour—A household without servants—All building and improvements put a stop to—Deserted shipping—Collingwood—Richmond—Princes Bridge—South Melbourne and the government sale—Road to the beach—Decision the watchword of the colonists—St. Kilda—Brighton.

As you approach Melbourne from the interior, the extent of the town is better seen than from the river, for you travel along open hilly ground, which commands a comprehensive view of the city and its environs. It is built for the most part in a small valley running north and south, and sloping down to the river, with gentle rising ground towards its eastern and western suburbs; consequently the mass of buildings which form the centre of the town are inconveniently situated on this low ground, which is flooded by the rains in winter, and scoured by the dust in the summer. The town itself was originally one mile long, and three quarters of a mile in breadth, going back from the river; but the whole of this space has been long since built upon, and it may be now said to cover double that superficies, the extreme ends being carried over the two eminences. On the outside of this is a reserve of considerable extent, the trees on which have fortunately been preserved; beyond this, again, the lands which were sold in small lots of twenty-five acres have been divided and formed into streets, which are in fact an extension of the city of Melbourne, having the reserve, a beautiful park, in the centre.

The appearance of the town from the top of the gaol,

the signal-station, and other elevated spots, is most interesting, one might say splendid; and the country and immediate vicinity when green has a most charming appearance, though there is wanting what many call the picturesque; and persons coming from Sydney, accustomed to its matchless harbour and beautiful scenery, might be tempted to make a comparison where none can be made, each having advantages and beauties of its own. In the distance you see the spacious estuary of Port Philip girding the horizon, and the shipping in Hobson Bay peering over the low land between the river and the beach. In the foreground the town lies at your feet for two miles along the bank of the river; the streets intersecting each other at right angles in the direction of the four points of the compass. Collins-street, Bourke-street, and Elizabeth-street, are fine, wide, airy streets, well paved and macadamised; between them, however, there are narrow lanes, which neither add to the beauty of the town nor the health of the inhabitants. Lanes in a modern city like Melbourne ought to have been expunged from the plan; but we presume that the surveyor who laid it out in 1837 little dreamt what it would be in 1852. Two years after the first allotments were sold, there were scarcely 500 inhabitants on the spot; in 1851, before the gold discoveries, there were nearly 24,000; at this present moment, from the influx of emigrants, there may be 50,000 people congregated in the city and suburbs.

The rapid progress of the place before the gold discoveries is a proof of the richness of the country, of which its port is one of the outlets. "Prior to the discovery of her gold," according to the report of the chairman of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, "the export produce of Victoria was proportionately larger than that which any other of our colonies has exhibited. For the year 1850, for example, when the value of colonial produce exported was 1,042,000*l.*, and the average population 70,000 souls, we have an export at the rate of nearly 15*l.* per head, which for every person in the colony gives a power for the introduction of all kinds of necessaries that must effectually promote at once the business of the colony and the resources of enjoyment to its society." What this average

may be for the financial year of 1852-53, when probably 15,000,000*l.* of gold may be thrown into the scale, it is impossible to tell. The sober figures of statistics seem to start from their propriety at the calculation.

The public buildings, such as the Court-house, the Gaol, the Custom-house, the Mechanics' Institute, the several churches of different denominations, the banking-houses, and many of the merchants' warehouses and shops, private dwelling-houses and hotels, are such as would not suffer from comparison with the public or private buildings in any well-built town in England; and we may safely say that business, in all its branches, is conducted on an equally fair footing, perhaps more liberal than amongst the generality of the mercantile communities in the mother-country. The merchant will find there, and in the other towns of Australia, always a profitable field at command for the employment of his capital, whether by exporting produce or importing merchandise. With the retail dealers, on the debit-side of his ledger, he may transact a safe indent and agency business, or sell them goods upon consignment, either at his own risk or that of the shipper. In the former case he has seven and a half per cent on the amount, in the latter only five, receiving payment in the usual way, by bills and cash; and now that the auriferous *banks* in the interior have been discovered, the country store-keepers will balance their accounts with gold-dust. The squatters, however, are his best customers; with them he transacts a legitimate business of barter and commission; and herein the merchant must be possessed of *bonâ-fide* capital, for the purpose of enabling him to grant the squatter twelve months' running credit in money and goods to carry on their stations, until they realise the means of payment from their annual clip and increase. He furnishes them with supplies of tea, sugar, and flour, and every luxury in eating and drinking; besides slop-clothing, and other descriptions of merchandise required for the use of the women and children, as well as the men upon their stations: he is not supposed to keep all those articles in his warehouse, nor to break packages for their supply, but he sends the various orders to customers among the shopkeepers, who execute them. In many instances he is the settler's banker,

and cashes all drafts for money from the station, charging five per cent; as security for this outlay, he can obtain a preferable lien upon the ensuing clip of wool, which is registered in the Supreme Court of the colony. This staple commodity, with the not less remunerative products of tallow, hides, and horns, forms a valuable list of entries on the credit-side of the squatter's account. This is the most profitable account in the merchant's ledger; for it does not stop here. The exportation of so much raw material to the mother-country is productive of still further profit; and when he considers that there are annually from these two colonies alone upwards of 200,000 tons of shipping employed in this traffic, he may form a rough estimate of the business done in the ports of Sydney, Melbourne, and Geelong. Thus the variety of an Australian merchant's dealings requires a head well versed in the intricacies of export and import trade, with a thorough knowledge of their financial arrangements.

We put forward these particulars to be useful to the intending merchant colonist, and we can vouch from experience of their general correctness. In the same spirit we shall be excused by the ordinary reader for giving a few observations on the position the merchant should assume on establishing himself in any of the Australian towns or cities. One indispensable advantage in his commercial transactions with the English market is to have a substantial connexion in London or Liverpool, so that *he* may appear an importer of merchandise in the colony, and *they* become sellers of produce in the home markets, each party thereby obtaining a profit at first hand. And from the length of time required in communicating between the two countries, the most implicit confidence should be placed in the mercantile integrity of each other. The shipper in England should not foist inferior merchandise at high prices upon his consignee, if he expects a quick return; neither is it honest for the colonial agent to speculate with the funds realised from the sale of goods entrusted to his mercantile honour—that bulwark of British commerce,—a sin which has been flagrantly committed by some of the oldest houses in the colonies, and which has drawn upon them the just reprehension of all upright merchants. Un-

der all circumstances, therefore, it will be well for the trader not to speculate beyond his *bonâ-fide* capital; for the colonists are very suspicious of men of straw. Let him assume no higher position, likewise, in the community than his means will justify; for he who is unsuccessful in his speculations, and has to expose his nakedness in the insolvent court, finds it more difficult to resume business with white-washed garments in these communities than he would in the mother-country. There the circle of commerce being so much smaller, his transactions are better known to the public, and the man is soon discovered who transacts business wrongfully. His conduct is severely canvassed, and a brand is set upon him. Many bold schemers have mingled in the mercantile affairs of these colonies, hoping to reap a rich harvest from their speculations; but they have invariably failed. Let him avoid also companies and bubble-banks which promise large dividends, whether he has funds of his own or entrusted to him for investment. The commercial reputation of the Australian towns has suffered very materially from such projects, when the directors and managers were not men of probity. Moreover, they do not possess so many advantages for the capitalist as those which lie open to individual enterprise. We do not greatly recommend the opening of branch establishments by extensive London or Liverpool houses, without their having implicit confidence in their local partners or managers. From some cause they do not appear to have succeeded; for during the crisis of 1843 they were among the first to stop payment, and in several instances brought down the parent establishments along with them. Probably the circumstance of the junior partners being too far removed from their elder compeers rendered them more speculative in their transactions, and less economical in their expenditure. The merchant, therefore, who is desirous of entering heart and hand into the trade and prospects of these colonies should proceed himself to the field of action, and become personally known to his constituents.

In strolling through the streets of Melbourne, we were very much pleased with the appearance of the shops, which more than any other occupation in the colony retained its

true English features. It was a rare harvest for the proprietors of these shops; from the little storekeeper to the extensive haberdasher, all were making exorbitant profits out of the gold-diggers. The same system of doing business is pursued by them as in England; the same puffing advertisements and shop-decorating. The largest profits are realised upon soft goods and fancy-wares, slop-clothing, and the like; and when articles of wearing-apparel are scarce in the market, the most extraordinary prices are obtained from the diggers. We saw *2l.* a pair given for stockmen's boots, which ordinarily sold for 6*s.*; and as the shopkeeper sells every thing for cash in this golden age, he makes no bad debts. Any one who lives frugally under these circumstances cannot fail to do well. One-half the economy and caution required to make both ends meet in the overcrowded towns of the mother-country will lead to independence in Australia. Many of the most thriving shopkeepers there have prided themselves upon having landed in these colonies with only a few pounds, or perhaps shillings in their pockets.

But the class of men who were gathering the richest harvest from the gold-diggers were the innkeepers. The public-houses throughout the city are an exact importation from the old country, and their proprietors a similar stamp of men. The bar of a tap-house in Melbourne is exactly like those in London; in fact, all the appurtenances you see around have been imported from there. We strolled into the tap-rooms of these houses occasionally to see the kind of life carried on in them; and every where extravagance and folly was the order of the day. Those men who had returned well-laden with their gatherings at the golden mount could not drink fast enough, nor consume sufficiently expensive liquors, to ease them of their earnings. "Drink away, boys! Let's see it out! There's plenty more to be had where this came from!" were the expressions used as they tossed their money lavishly into the till of the innkeeper. The consequence was, that ordinary accommodation was not to be had at these places of entertainment without paying the most exorbitant charges. Hence the newly-arrived people found it hard upon their purses to live in the extrava-

gant manner pursued by the successful gold-diggers in the inns and hotels. The more prudent among them lived in tents and bark-huts at the outskirts of the town, partaking of nothing more expensive than good bush fare—tea, damper, and mutton. We therefore counsel the intending gold-hunter to be careful of his means at first, and to make no attempt to go with the stream, until he has been lucky in filling his belt with plenty of gold-dust. While on landing he sees around him the most reckless extravagance and riot in the hotels and other houses of accommodation, we caution him to avoid squandering his means in their taps or parlours. It is a matter of great importance, likewise, to maintain temperate habits where so much drunkenness prevails. At the same time we are not the advocates of entire abstinence from strong drinks; for such is the effect of the climate upon the kind of water to be found there, that it is rendered more wholesome by the addition of a little spirit; and, indeed, is a safer beverage, under certain circumstances, than tea. No! what we refer to are the many temptations which surround the "thirsty soul" in that social community to break all pledges. Rum is cheaper there than in England, and money is ridiculously plentiful; while the constitution is excited to the drinking point sooner amongst boon companions in that warm climate. These influences tend to destroy the equilibrium of the sober man, to say nothing of the confirmed drunkard or dissolute youth.

The mass of people, therefore, whom we encountered in our rambles through the streets and places frequented by the public, were bodies of men who had come into town from time to time from the diggings, either for pleasure, to purchase necessaries, or to recruit their health; and many with a determination to keep to steady work. The two former classes gave life to the town; many, as we have seen, squandering their hard-earned wealth in the pot-houses; others purchasing largely, to the great advantage of the tradespeople. Some few were prudent, and deposited their gains in the banking-houses, or purchased pieces of land to build upon when labour would become more plentiful. But the great mass shewed every disposition

to continue hewers of wood and drawers of water; and probably, after all their success, they would be in the end just where they were at starting, excepting that they may be somewhat less strong than they would have been, had they persevered in the quiet industrious occupations which hitherto prevailed throughout the colony. But it is vain to reason even with those men who are upon the spot, and have experienced many of the privations attending the pursuit. Every man, or the great mass, whether equal to the labour or not, seemed to be determined to try his luck, and, if fortunate, to enjoy himself.

While the labouring class of people rejoiced in the altered state of the colony, those who were accustomed to depend upon the labour of others for their prosperity and house-comforts in town suffered materially from the change. Melbourne is no longer what it was in this respect; and though it may be a place to amass money in, yet, unless immigration effects a great change, it will be a place where such a thing as comfort cannot very well exist, according to general notions. A professional gentleman gave us the following account of his position. They had been in family, prior to the gold-discovery, eleven persons, including three women-servants and one man-servant. The latter, who was his groom, and two of the women, left him; so he was obliged to act in the former capacity himself. However, as he found the annoyance and loss of time spent in taking his horse to water some distance from his house was greater than the pleasure he had in riding, he soon disposed of him. Instead of attempting to hire other persons, it was determined upon to manage, for the present, with the old cook as well as they could. And as she was rather aged, and of portly dimensions, they thought that she might be depended upon. The lady, however, had her own ideas on the matter. She thought the time was arrived to make her fortune, and she determined to go to the diggings, to wash and cook for the men. In three weeks she returned, having expended all her means, nearly blind from the flies, and in a dreadful state of bodily health from exposure and privation, to which she was quite unequal. After staying a while with her old master until she was partly recruited, she determined once more to proceed

to the point of attraction, although she knew that the diggers paid no attention to their linen. Her employers, however, would not allow themselves to be made a convenience of; so they informed her that they had been taught a lesson —namely, that of being able to be their own servants; and rather than undergo the annoyance of constantly changing, they had resolved for the present to rely upon themselves. Though it was no pleasant position to be in, yet as there was no help for it, they were consoled with the fact, that their expenses of housekeeping had greatly decreased, and that they were independent.

From this the fastidious man who has been brought up in luxury, and expects to find servants to attend upon him, will gather, that Australia, in its present social condition, is no place for him. We have shewn that, on landing in any of the principal towns, he will find house-accommodation and boarding expensive and difficult to obtain; and that at the gold-diggings every man is obliged to look after his own personal comforts. There he will have no servants to attend to his little wants,—no laundress to dress his natty shirt-fronts,—no obliging cook to prepare his favourite meal. We would therefore advise such gentlemen as have formed themselves into companies for the purpose of proceeding to the gold-diggings, to take a few lessons in cooking and washing before their departure, these being two essential qualifications for the independent Australian gold-digger. We do not say this to deter such parties from trying their luck at the diggings; for in the end it may make better men of them. All we entreat of them is, to be careful how they judge of the social condition of a country, where they are apt to be prejudiced, because they cannot obtain comforts and luxuries according to their notions of living. We might have growled at, and quarrelled with, such contingencies again and again; but we put a good face upon the matter, and met these apparent disagreeables cheerfully. And so far from dreading to encounter them again, we may probably, in a short time hence, be found baking a damper in the ashes of an Australian bush-fire.

Notwithstanding the busy aspect of certain localities in the city, where these gold-diggers congregated for busi-

ness or pleasure, there was an appearance of desertion at other places which apparently had but lately been the scenes of busy operations. These were indications of the golden monster threatening to swallow up the pastoral lamb. For several miles round much of the country is enclosed by excellent fences and under cultivation. Every where you see farm-houses and country-mansions, shewing the appearance of comfort and plenty, the result of the labour of an industrious people upon a grateful soil. But when you come to examine them, their male occupants have fled, and all industry is put a stop to. In the towns the mark of the golden hoof is equally apparent. Where formerly private and public improvements had been going on, and the shipping-port all activity, now you see buildings unfinished and improvements at an end, and a deserted shipping lying in the harbour.

One day we visited a small town, about two miles beyond the eastern suburb of Collingwood, called Richmond. It is pleasantly situated on some rising ground, close by a piece of flat agricultural land adjoining the river. It contains about 100 houses, and when all the people were at home it could muster some 6 or 700 inhabitants. Here we called upon a family who had come out in the ship with us, and who had not only domiciled themselves in this short time after their arrival, but the father of the family and his two sons had commenced business in the city; and they had judiciously fixed upon this suburban town for their residence, in preference to the bustling and dusty streets of Melbourne. The family consisted of the parents, two sons, three daughters, and an old and tried domestic whom they had brought with them. Already in their snug little cottage there was an air of comfort which was truly pleasing. And although we are no advocate for families encumbering themselves with too much furniture on the voyage, we could not but sympathise with Miss Bessy, who sat down to her old piano and played us a tune, with an affection for the instrument which was quite charming.

There is one public structure in Melbourne deserving of notice, and that is the Prince's Bridge. This bridge is thrown over the river about 500 yards above the

dam, and is a great ornament to the city. It is built of very hard stone of a most durable kind. The span of its single arch is but a few feet less than the centre arch of London Bridge, and the balustrade is very handsome. The causeway to this arch, over the flat land on the opposite side of the river to the town, is of a considerable length, having under it several small arches to carry off the floods, which are sometimes very heavy, making, as we were informed, a fair breach over the flat land between the river and Hobson Bay. Below the bridge the river is dammed up, in order to keep back the tide and secure to the inhabitants a supply of fresh water.

Crossing over the bridge, you come to South Melbourne on the map, although in reality there is nothing in the shape of buildings to warrant this title to the land across the river, from the circumstance that no buildings have been erected there, in consequence of the inundations to which it is liable. These inundations do not occur in the winter season, when the greatest amount of rain falls in Victoria, but in the middle of summer; and they are caused by the melting of the snow on the Australian Alps, from whence the Yarra-Yarra derives its source. Much damage is annually committed by the flood amongst the farms on the banks of the river. In December 1842 the government submitted the allotments of this section of Melbourne to public competition, which was duly announced in the *Gazette* to take place *upon the ground* on a certain day in that month. During the night preceding that day the river rose and overflowed the bank, covering the ground, which the surveyors had pegged out, many feet deep with water. When the intending purchasers came down in the morning to view the *land* announced for sale, they saw nothing from the punt which ferried them across but *water;* and although they considered water frontage a great desideratum in the value of land, yet water *abovage,* if we may be pardoned the term, was rather too much of a good thing for them. This, of course, stopped the sale; so that excepting some half-acre allotments fenced in upon the rising ground behind, this part of Melbourne has been merely used as brickfields.

Proceeding from the bridge in a southerly direction, you come to the beach mentioned upon our first arrival in Hobson Bay. There is a pretty good road for a few hundred yards after you cross over the causeway; but the remainder of the way is along an old forest track, at one place through a swamp, at another through drift-sand. Near the town this tract of land is thinly covered with gum-trees; but as you approach the beach, these give way to the bottle-brush, and other shrubs and trees which grow on the sandy shores of Australia. The beach itself, where boats land from the shipping in Hobson Bay opposite, is a desolate-looking spot at the best, notwithstanding the presence of two inns and a number of wooden tenements. At the time we visited this place, and passed over the flat land on the south side of the river, there were no tents erected by the newly-arrived emigrants. Since then, we learn by the latest accounts that many thousands are encamped there, who either cannot obtain shelter in the town, or do not possess the means of paying for accommodation. This has been always the case with newly-arrived immigrants on the Australian shores. They *will* huddle together like sheep upon the most convenient spot to their last abode, and nearest the principal town, apparently afraid of venturing further inland. We would advise these people to proceed without delay to some of the smaller townships in the interior, where they will have a better chance of commencing colonial life in earnest, than looking bewildered upon the bustling throng of the city.

We have observed that many immigrants, upon their arrival in these colonies, more especially from the middle classes of society, are too chary in entering upon any project, or applying for any situation; they prefer waiting a little to look about them. Such prudent caution is no doubt commendable; but as it is better to be looking about and doing something at the same time, we would advise such persons to pursue their avocations without delay, and accept the first likely situation that offers, even although such employment or speculation yields small profit for the first twelve months. In mingling thus at the earliest opportunity in the business of the colony,

they are merely serving an apprenticeship to colonial life—what is graphically termed becoming "colonialised." We would strongly impress upon the mind of every man and woman bent upon the voyage, the necessity of coming to a prudent decision on the matter before leaving this country. After maturely considering the propriety of the step they are taking, husband and wife, brother and sister, ought to be of one mind; they should then shake off all wavering, and pursue their way to the land of their adoption cheerfully, or not at all. If they have any lingering doubts as to the prudence of their act, they had better give it in favour of the mother country, and remain behind; for those who carry doubts with them will most assuredly find them rankle in their mind there, and they will tend to suppress that energy and cheerfulness which are almost essential features in the character of the successful colonist in Australia. There he must strip off his coat and put his "shoulder to the wheel" willingly, and commence the "battle of life" on that field of action as if he was just beginning the world anew. This done, we will guarantee that he will sleep soundly over his determination, and rise refreshed under its influence, his eye beaming with hope as he looks towards the promised land. Every man, therefore, should have a clear perception of what his intentions are upon arrival; to trust entirely to circumstances is to lean upon a broken reed.

Proceeding along the beach for about a couple of miles from the landing in a southerly direction, you come to St. Kilda, a pleasant spot, with some agreeable residences on its rising ground, facing the shipping in the bay. It is scarcely large enough to be considered a township. Brighton, however, two miles further on, has more pretensions to that title. Like its well-known progenitor in England, it is the resort of the townspeople for the luxury of bathing quarters. Here the wealthy inhabitants of Melbourne have a pleasant retreat from the dust and heat of the city. The road to it is not by the beach, as we have supposed the reader to understand, but by a tolerably good road a considerable distance to the left of it, through some very agreeable open forest-land. These suburban residences

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inform the stranger who visits the Australian shores, more than all the wonderful strides of the busy towns, of the quiet yet firm manner in which the Anglo-Saxon race takes root in these colonies; that there is in them a determination to rear up the homely institutions of their fatherland, and to live and die on the soil of their adopted country.

CHAPTER IX.

GEELONG AND ITS ENVIRONS.

The road from Melbourne to Geelong—The steamboat route—An Australian breakfast—The outer harbour of Geelong—Anchorage for English ships—Corio Bay—Character of the surrounding scenery—Appearance of the town of Geelong—Advantageous site—Population—South Geelong—Barrabool hills—Suburbs of Geelong—Warnambool—Belfast—Portland—Position of Geelong as an out-port—Working of the Ballarat gold-fields—Tabular statement—Prospects for the educated classes—Fruits to be won by perseverance—A gold inheritance for the British race.

THE traveller proceeding from Melbourne to Geelong has the choice of two routes: one by land, along an uninteresting road; the other by water, making a pleasant trip of it in a steamboat. The distance by the road is fifty-four measured miles; by water, as the steamboat makes the voyage, it is somewhat less. On reference to the map, it will be seen that both routes skirt the north-west shore of the great estuary of Port Philip, and make the half-circuit of Corio Bay. There is not much traffic on the road, and we are not aware that there is any public conveyance between the two places. The road for the greater part of the way is over a desolate-looking plain, destitute of trees and shrubs, and scantily covered with grass; and like the land about Williamstown, there is a great scarcity of water. At the Werribee River, about half-way, and the Little River, within eighteen miles of Geelong, both of which are dry watercourses for the greater part of the year, there are two indifferent inns. From this very uninviting state of the road, therefore, few people from Melbourne travel by land to Geelong; and when the settlers from the Portland Bay district require to visit the metropolis of Victoria, they ride to Geelong on horseback, where they leave their horses, and proceed by steamboat to the city.

One bright sunny morning we took our passage on board the *Vesta* steamboat at Melbourne for Geelong. This vessel is a small iron boat, having two engines, each of fifteen-horse power; she was imported from England upwards of twelve years ago, and was brought to the colony in pieces. We started from the Queen's Wharf punctually at seven o'clock, and reached Geelong at half-past twelve, making the voyage in five hours and a half, including a stoppage at Williamstown of half an hour. This little vessel is well commanded by Captain Wetheridge, and has every comfort and convenience on board that the most fastidious passenger could wish for, and would bear comparison with the best river-boats in the United Kingdom. While proceeding down the river, we partook heartily of a substantial breakfast on board, served up in the best style and at a reasonable charge. As we looked around the breakfast-table upon our fellow-passengers, we could not but observe with what keen appetites they dispatched the savoury dishes of pork-chops, grilled fowls, beefsteaks smothered in onions, accompanied by hot potatoes, which composed this early meal; but for the tea and coffee, we should have supposed it dinner instead of breakfast. The quantity of animal food consumed in this country is extraordinary; almost every one eats meat three times a day. In the hottest weather too it seems to make no difference, where in other countries the appetite refuses to attack animal food in the summer; and yet no bad effects upon the general health of the community from this cause have been perceived. It would appear as if the invisible secretions of the body, which the dry warm atmosphere of Australia absorbs so abundantly, require a large amount of strong nourishing food to reproduce them and keep up the system—not the attenuated frame of the aborigine, but that portly figure which the Englishman loves to display.

After a delay of about half an hour, occupied in "coaling" at the hulk in Hobson Bay, and landing and taking in passengers and cargo at Williamstown, our smart little boat steamed at a brisk rate round Point Drake, speedily leaving the lighthouse behind and opening up the waters of Geelong harbour. To say that the day was *bright* is using a feeble expression to convey to the reader any idea of the

brilliancy of an Australian summer morning; the sky and water absolutely glittered in the sunbeams, and we enjoyed the shade of the awning spread over the quarter-deck of the vessel amazingly. As she paddled along within a few miles of the shore, on our right hand we could see the poverty-stricken country through which the road from Melbourne to Geelong traversed; for many miles inland it appeared a barren plain without any vegetation on it; we were, therefore, the more gratified when the fertile lands on the opposite shore, or southern side of the harbour, became sufficiently close for us to discern its verdant slopes. This tract of agricultural land in the environs of Geelong is called Indented Head, and possesses the richest alluvial soil in that vicinity. Through the telescope we could see numerous farm-houses studding the green cliffs of the bay all the way along as far as Point Henry. This point divides the waters of Geelong Harbour and Corio Bay; closing in upon it, we saw a great many large square-rigged vessels lying at anchor. We were informed that the greater portion of the wool raised in the province was shipped at this port, which is a sufficient indication of the rich pastures in the country to the westward.

Ships arriving in Port Philip harbour from England, bound for Geelong, proceed no further than this anchorage, which is about ten miles by water, and six miles by land, from the town. And, as we have stated in our memorandum upon arriving in Hobson Bay with regard to the conveyance of passengers and their luggage from the ship to Melbourne, the same applies here; for they have to proceed to Geelong, with their goods and chattels from the ship, at their own risk and expense. The most convenient way to reach it is by hiring a boat to put you on board the steamer from Melbourne. As we passed along, the vessel stopped to pick up passengers in this way, which added considerably to the company on board. And thus we steamed merrily into Corio Bay, passing over a shoal which reaches from Point Henry across the entrance to the bay, with not sufficient water upon it for ships of large burden to sail over it. There is no doubt, in the opinions of persons competent to judge on the matter, that a sufficiently deep channel could be made through this

shoal with a good steam-dredging machine, so as to allow the largest ships to enter; in which case the port of Geelong would be a more important one than that of Melbourne. The surveyors report that there is no great obstacle to overcome in doing it, and even in rendering it a permanent channel for the heaviest war-ships; whereas it is doubtful whether the removal of the barrier at the entrance to the Yarra would continue clear. The Yarra is a stream liable to great floods, and its waters convey the sedimentary matter which form these *deltas*, when the downward current meets the opposing tide at its mouth. Corio Bay, on the contrary, has no river or running stream flowing into its basin, and therefore has no outset to meet the flowing tide. The shingle which forms this bar being once removed, it is calculated that there are no influences likely to deposit the same again. As the colony advances, there is every likelihood, therefore, of this important matter being accomplished sooner at Geelong than Melbourne; as it would not only take less time, but much less expense to execute.

Upon entering Corio Bay—the inner Geelong of Captain Flinders—you are surprised and are charmed with the view before you; and if you have been up the Mediterranean and seen the bays there, you may have your memory thrown back upon some of those localities which were so agreeable to you at the time, and of which you are so strongly reminded by all around you. Before you is an amphitheatre of green undulating cliffs, rising abruptly from the almost circular basin of the bay, some sixty or eighty feet above the smooth sandy beach. On your right, a few miles back from the shore, over part of the sterile plain we have mentioned, rises the thickly-wooded cone of Station Peak, to an altitude of eleven hundred feet. This mountain, and the lesser granite hills which surround it, called the Anaki-Youans, has been said to resemble Mount Etna and its volcanic group of cones rising from the Bay of Sicily. On your left hand, about the same distance back from the southern side of the bay, the Barrabool hills present a contrast to the densely-timbered flanks of their neighbours, from being as clear of trees as any Welsh or Highland mountains. Altogether the scenery of the

country in the vicinity of this miniature bay, from the cleared rising ground on and about Point Henry, covered with rich verdure, round to the forest-land on the opposite shore, with its dark-green foliage, seen between the clear blue sky above and the darker tint of the water below, presents many subjects worthy of the painter's art.

The channel through this shallow bay is from four to six fathoms deep, and makes a half-circuit in its course round the northern and western shores, crossing to the south side of the bay, where the town of Geelong is situated. As you approach the town along this channel by the steamboat, it lies right ahead of the vessel, and presents a very picturesque effect as you near the landing, where there is a very long jetty run out, at which small coasting-vessels and steamboats land their passengers and cargoes. The appearance of the town from the deck of the vessel is very pleasing at a distance, where you can see the whole extent of this northern section of it; and as there is no dirty smoke hovering over its streets and buildings, to give them that dingy hue which blackens the finest cities in the mother-country, they have a freshness and sharpness about them that is very delightful to the eyes of the new-comer. The houses cover a slope rising gently from the cliff which surrounds the bay, and you see them carried over the eminence which divides the town, upon which is built a pretty little church. But as the vessel nears the wharf, a terrace of buildings which covers the cliff in front hides the view entirely from your sight; and as you proceed into the town, you ascend a steep bank all the way. The most conspicuous building which greets you on your entrance into this delightfully-situated town, is a pleasing edifice to all travellers—a spacious stone-built hotel. During our travels through these two colonies, we do not remember having seen a more elegant, commodious, and comfortable house of accommodation than this hotel at Geelong; it has as good a coffee-room as could be desired, and not inferior to those of first-class houses in England; you meet with great attention from the servants, and every thing is remarkably clean. As we sat down in one of the compartments with some refreshment before us, and the *Geelong Advertiser* in our hand, reading the

latest news from the diggings, we could scarcely imagine that we were within a day's journey of the far-famed Ballarat gold-field. What! a few weeks' hard work there, and you fill your pockets full of gold, and in a day or two you may be lodged like a prince in this comfortable hotel to spend your earnings. The fact sounds more like a fable than an every-day reality. Verily this is a wonderful country discovered in a wonderful age!

Geelong—originally named Corio—is the second town of importance in the province of Victoria. By the last census in 1851, previous to the gold discoveries, it contained 8291 inhabitants within the four wards of its police boundary; 4491 males, and 3800 females. What the proportion of the sexes may be now it is difficult to say; that which has occurred elsewhere in the towns of the colony since this all-absorbing discovery has taken place here; and Geelong, when we visited it, was almost deprived of its male adult population. The town is well laid out, and there are some as good buildings in it as you will find in Melbourne, and the site is infinitely more salubrious and picturesque; and should it outstrip that city in its progress, which its citizens are sanguine of, it possesses natural advantages for the future capital of this *England of the Southern Hemisphere* which the present seat of government can lay no claim to. While the latter is built in a valley, most unfavourable for its sanitary condition, Geelong is built upon an eminence, surrounded by an open country, with the bay in front; admirably situated for drainage, and well supplied with wholesome fresh water, which has already been brought to the dwellings of the inhabitants in iron pipes. There is no comparison between the two places as to which is best situated for the comfort and health of a dense population.

Crossing from the bay over the rising ground already mentioned, you descend about an equal distance on the other side, when you come to South Geelong, situated on the Barwon River, a wide and flowing stream about twice the breadth of the Yarra at Melbourne. Although there is here a large proportion of the buildings which form the town, still it has not made any thing like the progress that the northern section has done: of course this is easily ac-

counted for, from the latter being contiguous to the shipping; but the day may yet come when some enterprising company will render the Barwon navigable from its entrance in Bass's Strait, and then South Geelong will rival its sister. To see the course of this stream in all its beauty, you have but to ascend the Barrabool hills on the opposite side of the river, which you cross in a punt sufficiently large to ferry over two drays and twenty oxen. The soil on those hills is exceedingly rich, surpassing, it is said, that of any other part of the colony; and unlike most hills and mountains in this primitive region, they are clear of trees; the farmer having nothing more to do than drive the plough into the virgin soil, without clearing or other preparation. From this circumstance there is an unobstructed view around them in all directions; and the one to which we have alluded, viz. the view eastward down the course of the Barwon, which is truly charming. From Fisher's agricultural station on the brow of the eastern flank of these hills, some two or three hundred feet above the level of the river, you see the Barwon winding its way through an open verdant country, with scarcely a tree on its banks to hide its glassy surface, and then spreading out in a wide sheet of water, named Lake Connewarre, which suddenly contracts into the narrow outlet of the river in Bass's Strait. Retracing your steps from these hills back to South Geelong over the river, and approaching North Geelong, you have a charming prospect from the rising ground which divides the town. From this direction Corio Bay has the aspect of a Cumberland lake, and Station Peak might be compared with some of the famous mountains in that picturesque county; you also see the streets and buildings in the town to better advantage from this eminence. When the original plan of the town becomes entirely built upon, the streets running north and south will have a fine effect; at present, however, those which are most forward are the streets running parallel with the bay in front.

To the westward of South Geelong there are some very pretty suburban residences, and two rising villages a short distance out of town. The latter, named Ashby and Irishtown, have a population of many hundreds each, the inhabi-

tants being principally employed in dairy and agricultural farms. It is upon such localities that we would recommend the new-comer to plant his seed, and obtain his first stock of colonial experience. Families who may be disappointed with the aspect of affairs upon their arrival at Melbourne or Geelong, will find better opportunities of establishing themselves upon a freehold with a small sum, and forming a quiet home for themselves in the smaller towns of the interior, than risking their time and means at these expensive-living towns. The man of enterprise also should push on as far as Warnambool, Belfast, or Portland, three flourishing seaport towns in this district, surrounded by rich agricultural lands. On referring to the map, the reader will find that the first of these, Warnambool, is about 180 miles from Geelong upon the River Marria, and forms a snug harbour for coasting vessels. It contains about 500 inhabitants; they transact a good business with the surrounding settlers, who are mostly agriculturists; and as it is likely that the threatened dearth of corn by the influx of so many immigrants will raise the value of this article to famine prices, no doubt that they will find it a surer way to gold-getting by cultivating their fields than digging on the mountains. We anticipate therefore, both here and at Belfast, twelve miles further west, the return sooner of their inhabitants from the diggings than to the larger towns already mentioned. The town of Belfast is the centre of a considerable population among these thinly-peopled regions; before the gold-discovery it contained within its police district 3846 inhabitants, 2365 males and 1481 females. Of course the majority of the male adults left, as in other places; but there is every likelihood that they will return, at all events during the sowing and reaping seasons, to secure the *golden* harvest. The town itself is a prettily situated place upon the shores of Port Fairy—which is but an indifferent harbour, from being exposed to the south-east winds, that blow very strong on this coast. However, small vessels from the neighbouring island of Van Diemen's Land, and other coasters, find it a tolerably safe anchorage when these winds do not set in, which is more than eight months in the year. There are between three and four hundred houses in the town, and four places of worship belonging

to different denominations; its population in 1851 was about 800. Further west, about forty-five miles by the road, you come to Portland, the most western township in the province of Victoria, and situated in the bay of that name. This has always been a central outport for the produce of the squatting districts around, and would have rivalled Geelong before now if the harbour had been a safe one. Like Port Fairy, however, Portland Bay is merely an open roadstead, where ships lying at anchor have to slip their cables and run when the south-east gales blow, and no boat can obtain a landing. These gales, however, are not so frequent as to prevent a considerable intercolonial trade to be carried on between this port and Launceston, which has continued ever since the establishment of the colony, when the success of both the town and district was mainly attributed to the enterprise of our very worthy friends, the Messrs. Henty. It contained within the bounds of its police district, according to the last census in 1851, 2342 inhabitants, 1459 males and 883 females. There are about four hundred brick and wooden houses in the town, several comfortable and commodious inns, many large warehouses, six churches, and a gaol. It has a postal communication overland with Melbourne once a week. Those who look over the list of vessels bound for these colonies from London, will have observed that there are occasionally one or two laid on for this port.

Taking Geelong, therefore, as a key to the rich lands of Australia, it is unrivalled in its resources, even by the finest ports on the east coast; for besides the advantages we have already enumerated, it possesses a gold-field little inferior to its neighbours, always excepting the mammoth-yielding Mount. It is well known that within this district gold was not only first discovered after the hidden treasures of Ophir were revealed, but nearly two years prior to the first discovery by Mr. Hargreaves gold was found in the neighbourhood, not in mere scales, but in nuggets several ounces in weight. Our time was limited, or we should have paid a visit to the famous Ballarat diggings. And as our history and description of these gold-fields would be incomplete without some allusion to them, we shall here extract a most ingenuous statement of the

chances of gold-digging in that locality by a correspondent of the *Melbourne Argus*, which we obtained in the colony, from which the intending gold-seeker will glean much valuable information, and the intelligent reader at once see the working of a hundred and forty-three cradles, as if they lay before him in one of these gold-valleys.

"*Buninyong.*—If Fortunatus had thrown the contents of his cap over the lands of Ballarat, the yield of riches would not have been increased. Here surface-workings are abandoned, and the sub-strata are delved, into for riches, which repay a thousandfold the labour expended on them. The yield is immense, and seemingly inexhaustible; the gold lies in 'pockets' in the blue slatey clay, and may be picked out with a knife-point. So rich, indeed, is it, that many have abandoned cradle-workings for tin dishes, which have yielded from two to three ounces in one washing. Many will make fortunes, hundreds a competency; and the vast majority will do well. Nature has spread out a vast magazine of riches for the enterprise of Geelong to stretch forth her hand and take it; and strong and earnestly have her sons set about the pleasant task. I have been at much trouble to compile a detailed table of the numbers of men on the ground, the number of cradles, the yields, and the time occupied in obtaining it; for I could not expect the public to believe such an extraordinary statement as I am about to lay before them, if such statement were not fortified by ample data. The wildest reports which have been circulated fall far short of the reality; and I am obliged to write truths that must appear to those far away as the chimerical workings of a diseased brain, or the results of an imagination unbridled by reason. I little thought when I first started to Buninyong, that it would fall to my lot to chronicle facts which, if embodied in romance, or made the elements of a fairy tale, would have excited a smile of incredulity.

"I subjoin a tabular statement, shewing that on the Ballarat gold-field 143 cradles and 567 men have produced, in the days specified in the table, the enormous amount of 4010 ounces, or 12,030*l.* worth of gold, taking it at the present commercial value of 3*l.* per ounce.

Cradles.	Number of men.	Days.	Ounces.	Cradles.	Number of men.	Days.	Ounces.
1	5	..	1	2	8	33	220
1	3	Just began	..	3	8	3	24
1	5	..	..	1	4	6	12
1	4	2	1	1	6	14	96
1	6	2½	14	1	2	3	30
1	4	14	28	1	3	6	48
1	5	1	5	1	3	..	..
1	3	5	4½	1	4	6	16
1	3	..	..	1	4	8	60
1	5	..	..	1	6	6	7
1	3	..	..	1	4	6	80
1	4	..	..	1	3	10	5
1	3	..	..	1	5	6	60
1	2	2	1¼	1	3	..	..
1	3	..	..	1	4	6	40
1	3	..	..	1	4	2	..
1	3	..	6	1	4	6	2
1	6	6	7	1	4	6	1
1	4	3	36	1	5	..	..
1	3	4	18	2	7	..	..
1	4	4	4	1	3	..	..
1	4	4	20	1	4	..	..
1	6	6	10	1	5	7	70
1	6	4	1½	1	3	24	48
1	4	..	..	1	10	14	314
1	4	1	1	1	4	4	12
1	6	28	288	1	4	7	48
1	3	4	6	1	4	5	3
1	4	..	..	1	4	6	30
1	4	4	4	1	4	4	6
1	4	5	12	1	3	..	..
1	5	5	15	1	4	..	..
1	2	6	4½	1	3	5	48
2	7	4	4½	1	5	5	10
1	5	27	307½	1	5	5	..
1	8	5	10	1	2	6	3
1	4	10	30	1	3	3	2
1	5	3	3	1	2	..	..
1	4	4	1	1	4	3	3
1	4	4	21	2	..	..	..
1	8	16	23	1	7	6	560
1	8	26	208	1	4	1	1
1	3	7	80	1	3	3	9
1	5	3	13	2	5	6	30
1	8	14	30	1	4	..	..
1	3	6	12	1	3	6	6
1	4	5	57½	1	3	6	72
1	3	6	18	1	2	2	2
1	4	20	80	1	4	..	..
1	7	6	7½	1	3	6	6
1	4	30	90	1	4	9	7½

Cradles.	Number of men.	Days.	Ounces.	Cradles.	Number of men.	Days.	Ounces.
1	5	6	30	1	6	7	14
1	4	3	10	1	3	3	100
1	4	9	36	1	2	..	1
1	3	2	2	1	6	3	1½
1	4	4	16	1	2	2	1
1	2	..	..	1	5	3	3½
1	2	..	..	1	3	7	4
1	4	14	84	1	5	4	4
1	5	..	..	1	5	6	16
1	3	2	1½	1	1	10	11
1	1	7	12	1	3	6	7
3	9	..	..	1	4	8	96
1	3	2	..	1	3	3	4
4	12	...	..	1	5	1	30
		Totals		143	567	712	4,010

"From these totals I deduce the following facts, which cannot fail to be interesting: 4010 ounces at 3*l.* an ounce realises to Geelong industry 12,030*l.* This sum, accurately proportioned, brings out the following details:—

MEN.	DAYS.	QUANTITIES. ozs.	dwts.	grs.
4⅓	5⅓	30	3	0
1	5⅓	6	19	3
1	1	1	6	2

"The first line gives the average of each party during the whole period; the second gives the average for each man during the whole period; and the third line gives the average which each man is gaining per day."

During our stay at Geelong we met and conversed with many gentlemen who had been to these Ballarat diggings, and who had returned successful, not only as gold-diggers, but from having followed those avocations which circumstances had created in this new order of things, and which at the time were well remunerated by the people at the diggings. In several instances our informants were professional gentlemen, who had not so much left their usual occupations, as their occupations had left them; consequently they were obliged to join in the golden scramble to earn a living. "Poverty," they say, "makes neigh-

bours of us all." In this instance the old adage was reversed, and the leveller of all distinctions in the present case was wealth: the simple employment of gathering gold from its natural bed made "Jack as good as his master." At first the meanness of the labour, and the degraded mode of living at the mines, made these parties hesitate in mingling with the general mob; this feeling, however, soon wore off, as the extraordinary reward for their exertions came into their pockets. And as there continued to arrive at the point of attraction many others who had moved in the same sphere of life with themselves, and who were bent upon the all-absorbing business of gold-digging, they not only became reconciled to the occupation, but it began to assume in their eyes a degree of respectability which it did not possess before. They saw before them merely a few years of hard uncomfortable toil, to amass a sufficient quantity of the coveted metal to ensure them an independence for life; and from the success of some, their expectations were not likely to be disappointed.

Let us apply the case of these gentlemen to those in a similar sphere of life in the mother country, and the result will be the same; for what is all their toiling at some laborious profession, but endeavouring to obtain a competency for the autumn of life? Others, again, try to grasp it in the liver-burning, brain-destroying regions of the Indies; while here, in the genial clime and golden lands of Australia, a certainty awaits their exertions, if judiciously and steadfastly applied to one pursuit. To the man of firmness and prudence the reward is there before him. The object is to be accomplished, if he have the means and appliances to set about and continue his task; and these are health and strength, with a small purse of the needful to start with. We say it again—and we are no enthusiasts in the matter—keep your eye fixed steadily upon the main chance, and you will turn up a prize; the gold is to be won. You must never flinch from the task, so long as it is honest, and you are able for the occasion.

This is no idle talk for the present, nor even wild speculation for the future; for we look upon these gold discoveries in Australia as a great inheritance for the British

race. Our own personal conviction is backed by the highest scientific authorities in saying, that among the mountain-chains of that auriferous region are treasures untold, to enrich generations yet to come. And if gold retains any thing like its value throughout the nations of the earth, either as a standard of currency or an article of merchandise, here is the universal bank for the persevering and industrious to draw upon. Your draft upon its treasures is by a draught of water through the sparkling dust, and you sign your name with the point of your pickaxe. And shall the educated classes fall behind in the pursuit, because it appears degrading in the eyes of the fastidious, or the contamination from others tends to immorality? He must indeed be a weak-minded man who will suffer from either; there is a greater likelihood of the mass becoming improved if the better class amalgamate with them. These considerations, as we have remarked, form not a question merely for the moment, which a few years may alter, but they will apply for all time, when our children and our children's children will be making up their minds to push their fortunes at the Australian gold-diggings.

As our stay was brief in this charming little town, we made as much of our time as possible in discussing matters of this kind with such of its intelligent inhabitants as we found at home. Then taking farewell of them, we stepped on board the steamboat for Melbourne, and prepared for our overland journey to Sydney.

CHAPTER X.

OVERLAND THROUGH VICTORIA.

The march of civilisation in the interior—Character of the inns—Traffic on the roads—Opening for railway communication—First stage on the road —Useful kinds of timber—Bush-flies—Township of Kilmore—A deserted village—High value of labour—Goulburn river—Township of Seymour—Inn at Middlemass—Bivouac—A party journeying to the diggings—"Borrowing a horse," and horse-stealing—Violet town—Aborigines—Stage on the road to the Broken river—Town and district of Benalla—"Fifteen-mile Creek" inn—Bush comforts—Town of Wangeratta—"Black-dog Creek" inn—Murray river—Site of the future town of Wodenga—Arrive at Albury—Boundary-lines of Victoria—Her unparalleled prosperity—A great future in store for this province.

To fireside travellers the map of a distant region like Australia, situated under the heavens of a different hemisphere, conveys but a very indifferent knowledge of its physical geography. And even were we to attach the most elaborate explanatory notes to the annexed map of the section of that vast country at present before us, we should fail in presenting the reader with any thing like a faithful sketch of its geological character, much less to denote those atmospheric changes which influence vegetation within such a range of latitude. We do not, therefore, presume to add any thing to the geographical information given by those who have gone over the ground before; all we shall endeavour to accomplish, in describing our overland journey from Melbourne to Sydney, will be to shew the reader that there are vast tracts of land in the interior of these colonies capable of maintaining dense populations, and that Australia is not entirely that barren waste, devoid of rivers, which ignorant or prejudiced writers have maintained. In this emigrating age, useful facts in detail are more desirable than elaborate general descriptions; and such it shall be our province to pre-

sent to the reader. Before entering upon the particulars, however, of our overland journey from Melbourne to Sydney, we may premise, that the general character of the country and its inhabitants was much above the estimate we had previously formed of Australia and the Australians in the far interior. For example, we found generally good accommodation at the roadside inns; although, in these days of gold and discomfort, at some places we did experience some inconvenience; but such, we have no hesitation in saying, will be found exceptional: and those persons who have described the accommodation to be met with in travelling through Australia as wretched, have, we will not say, stated that which in their case was incorrect; but we may be permitted to say, that they were very unfortunate in this respect. For ourselves, we must observe, that for civility, cleanliness, and comfort, we were pleased to find that, in general, our country-people gave full promise of not falling off from that which has been said to be peculiar to England, viz. the excellence of its roadside inns.

During our journey along the main roads of the two provinces, we encountered a travelling population which equally surprised and delighted us; the great traffic and bustle of people *en route* to and from the various gold-fields was oftentimes a stirring and animated sight: the men, women, and children on horseback and on foot, in various descriptions of carriages, carts, and drays, thronged the highways of the interior, independently of mail-carts and other means of postal communication between the various inland post-towns and the capitals of each colony, besides the flocks and herds seen in every direction; so that the supposed desolateness and solitariness of the interior does not exist to any thing like the extent that it is supposed to do. You pass through towns frequently where there are well-built stone, brick, and wood houses, with the usual public buildings which constitute a government township in Australia, occasionally having some pretensions to beauty of architecture. In these towns, likewise, you will find all the elements of what constitutes agreeable society, as established in the most refined towns and cities in the mother country. Occasionally, also, you

meet with, in well-chosen spots, the residences and homesteads of the squatters and other settlers, who live away from the busy world, in some of which great taste is displayed. As, for instance, at Cambamurro, the squatting station of Mr. Manning, not far from the Murrumbidgee river; there his amiable and accomplished lady proves what a charm there is in, and how much there is imparted to society by the presence of a lady in the wilds of the bush. And also at Mr. O'Brien's of "Deuro"—the native name of his station—whose residence is delightfully situated in the midst of land in the highest state of cultivation, and extensive enclosures, on a rising ground above the river Yass, such as any country gentleman in Britain would be well satisfied with. At this spot also is another instance to add to that we have alluded to, where the residence of a lady of refinement in the interior spreads the beneficial influence of her presence upon all around her.

Though there is much sameness in the scenery, and what some would consider monotonous in the aspect of the country, from the paucity of human habitations, still, as time rolls on, and they spread over the wilderness, this will be less felt. And as you pass for many miles frequently through fine open undulating forest-land, and large tracts entirely without timber, presenting no obstruction to the plough or harrow, you are impressed with the idea of a great future for Australia and the Australians. And when the means and appliances of this age of inventions are introduced to open up the interior of this fruitful region, there are no bounds to the success which these colonies will attain. Even at the present time, if it were possible to obtain the labour necessary, by the temporary sacrifice of feeling, to complete a railway to Wodenga, a distance of about 200 miles from Melbourne, on the Sydney road, seen on the map to be situated on the left bank of the Murray River, and forming the northern boundary of the province, and to accomplish which there does not appear to be any great obstacle, the advantages to Melbourne and the intervening territory would be very great. The riches and natural resources of the country are incalculable; and these will never be fully developed until population increases, and means are established to enable them to spread over the

country, by communication with the interior being made cheap and easy. At present, in the rainy weather, the roads are very bad; and the richer the soil, the roads seem to be in the worse condition,—in fact, they become almost impassable; and the carriage of supplies to the interior has reached the enormous charge of 90*l.* per ton to Mount Alexander from Melbourne. There is great danger also from the frequency of high and sudden floods in the interior, which destroy the ordinary roads of the country; so that the colonists should make every venture and sacrifice to complete a work, upon the judicious execution of which will depend in no slight measure their progress.

The distance from Melbourne to Sydney by the new line of road marked out on the annexed map is 590 miles. You proceed into this road through the northern suburb of the city; and for several miles you find it enclosed by post-and-rail fences, and in some parts macadamised. On either side there is much land under the plough, with many neat cottages having gardens belonging to the poorer class of settlers, and occasionally large farm-steadings and private residences belonging to the wealthier colonists. The road passes over a pleasing variety of hill and dale for the first forty miles, reminding the traveller frequently of the old turnpike-roads in the mother country. For a considerable part of the way you proceed over extensive grassy plains and much land that has a park-like appearance. Twenty-five miles on the road you come to a very pretty roadside inn, with a verandah in front, called the "Hunter's Rest," which in times of quiet would have been to the stranger not only a surprise at the presence of so much English comfort having taken root in the bush, so different from what he had pictured to himself, but also have given him a high opinion of the civilised condition in which the colonists have hitherto lived in the interior.

This picturesque and well-watered description of country extends to the base of a range of hills, the road passing over what is called the "Big Hill," which well deserves the name of mountain, from the summit of which you have a magnificent view of the country you have just traversed. The soil on the south side of the range is remarkably good; upon it the indigenous grasses grow luxuriantly,

and the cattle we saw grazing thereon were in fine order. Higher up, the eye rests pleasantly upon a homestead, the commencement of civilisation in this romantic spot, and well chosen, being only a short distance from the main road. Surmounting this hill, and descending its northern slope on the opposite side, the land is less fertile, and displays trees of a different character, such as are found throughout the colony to indicate the presence of poor land; these are stringy-bark, iron-bark, and such trees as split well, and are used for making posts and rails, shingles, and general building purposes in the bush. So far from this description of land being disadvantageous to the settler, it becomes, under certain circumstances, of greater value than the best pasture-ground; for without timber of this kind he would be often at a loss to erect substantial habitations, and make fences and hurdles for his sheep and cattle-yards, which are so necessary throughout all those colonies. As you get towards the foot of this range of mountains the soil gradually improves, and you soon pass over an undulating grassy tract of fine land; the country, however, does not appear to be well watered until you descend into the valley, where you come to the first rural township of any importance; this is Kilmore, a considerable post-town in Victoria, distant about forty miles from Melbourne, on the Sydney road.

As we descended into the valley we found it excessively hot and oppressive; there seemed to be little shelter from the powerful rays of the sun, and not much chance of a breeze sweeping through it to cool the heated air. This, with the presence of our old tormentors the flies, gave us an unfavourable impression of the place, for as we passed along we met several people suffering very much from their attacks. Most of the male inhabitants wore veils; but we found that feminine screen disagreeably warm; so we stuck a bough in front of our hat, which answered the purpose admirably, as we have seen the countrymen in England do with their horses for the like object. As these flies are such a positive nuisance in the colony, we would suggest the formation of a company to be called the "Fly-annihilating Association," trusting that it may attract the considerate attention of some of those patriotic gentlemen

who favour the world with forming companies of every sort, nothing daunted at times by the impossible. They may rest assured that their efforts would be hailed with delight by all classes of individuals in the Australian community, and we hope soon to see the prospectus.

Notwithstanding these disagreeables, we were pleased with the township of Kilmore, as it is the first inland town of any pretensions which you come to after leaving Melbourne on your overland journey. As you approach it from the adjacent high land, you see its position to advantage, and its tiny buildings lying out before you in the broad valley below; on nearer inspection, you see streets planned and pegged out by the surveyors; but there are many gaps to fill up before these can be discernible to the eye of a stranger. There are, however, several comfortable houses of accommodation in the place, with a hearty welcome from their landlords to the passing traveller; and we saw some commodious stores, wherein, we were informed, a large amount of business had been transacted until lately. In fact, before the gold-discovery few inland towns in this province gave greater hopes of becoming soon a place of considerable importance; since then, its signs of industrial advancement have been checked—all is silent where formerly the bustle and noise of labour was heard. The great majority of the men had gone away to the diggings, and those who had sufficient strength of mind to keep at home were thinking and speaking only of gold. We were told that the inhabitants principally consisted of Irish emigrants. There were three bakers' establishments in the township, but neither bread nor biscuit could be purchased at either of them; all the men were gone. Instead of supplying your wants, the solitary few who remained in this deserted village were profuse in their inquiries, and anxious to learn the last news from the diggings, and the future prospects of the diggers. In truth, at every town along the road this new discovery was the all-absorbing topic which filled the public mind; it was the only talk you were entertained with, and the word which was constantly uppermost in conversation was gold!

Again would the question as to the result of all this upon society obtrude itself upon the reflecting; and though

many have doubts, and say that the tilling of the soil is the foundation of social strength; and are well aware, and indeed feel certain, that the colonies must undergo a severe trial; yet it is in vain to endeavour to resist the general movement, and they are hurried along with the mass, and are off to the mountains for gold. Avarice seems to be the dominant passion, and the lust for gold "grows upon what it feeds upon." We had not noticed its effects in this manner so strongly shewn any where as in this community of Kilmore. We do not say this as a reproach to the people of that locality. They are not peculiar; the same passion is paramount in every community of tradespeople; and to make their fortunes is with them the business of life. Likewise to take advantage of the riches which at the present moment are within their reach is not only to be commended, but not to do so would shew a great want of energy, enterprise, and common sense.

It is true that for the time the framework of industrial enterprise, which has hitherto made Kilmore a prosperous locality, has been suddenly disrupted; it has become broken and scattered; yet, as time rolls on, matters will find their level; and fortune may not be so hard with the squatters in the immediate neighbourhood, who suffer so much by the desertion of their men. And as these gold-diggers must live, they considered that the high price they would obtain for their stock, to feed the increased population so close to their stations, would enable them to offer such remunerative wages as would secure a sufficient number of shepherds, and thereby save their flocks from being exposed to the attacks of the wild dog and aboriginal savage. As regards the immediate district of Kilmore, we were assured that the crops would be secured; many of the farmers had returned from the mines for this purpose, and after finishing their labours would return to their new occupation. The hay crop had been already housed, though at considerable expense; the wages given for this employment were thirty shillings a week and rations free. Reaping had also commenced, and men were engaged at 1*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* an acre; an industrious man could earn at this rate one pound per day. The crops, they said, that were now ripe would be got in;

but as nearly all the farmers in the district would be again off to the diggings after that had been done, fears were entertained for the next year. There is so much "looming in the future" among these corn-growers at the antipodes, that anxiety is felt by the timid and by such as cannot keep pace with these wonderful discoveries; others cannot easily accommodate themselves to the altered state of society; and no doubt those entrusted with power will be growing daily more anxious.

Passing onwards for twenty-five miles beyond Kilmore, you arrive at the Goulburn River, where there is another commencement of one of these inland towns, which form the stepping-stones to civilisation in the great interior of this island continent. The country for the first half of that distance is rather hilly, and becomes fatiguing work for your horses to go over, and you are obliged to travel at a slow pace; for nothing knocks up your faithful charger sooner than a continuous ascent and descent over a stony track upon a hot summer day. Much of it, however, is fair pasture-land, with occasional patches of good alluvial soil, which are easily distinguished from the poorer lands by their luxuriant vegetation. At a place called "Sandy Creek" we rested for our noon-day repast, and enjoyed the delicious shade of the Casuarina trees which overhung the pellucid stream flowing from pool to pool in the bed of this water-course. From here the aspect of the country improves, and for the remaining ten or twelve miles you journey along through more fertile and level land. The glimpses of the surrounding scenery which open up as you proceed are very pretty; and as a whole it may be considered a fine rich tract of country, with plenty of grass on it for sheep and cattle, well watered apparently, and presenting a number of spots admirably calculated for homesteads and farms. A short distance before you reach the banks of the river the country again becomes hilly, and you have to descend a tolerably steep bank at the crossing-place. The view from this height up and down the river is very pleasing, and the waters of the Goulburn present the surface of a deep and rapid stream. You cross the river here in one of the large punts used throughout these colonies. They are very clumsy, and are impelled across

by means of a rope fastened on each bank of the river; at the same time they are admirably adapted for the purpose of ferrying heavy drays over. This river is subject to considerable floods; a mark on a tree was pointed out to us as the height to which the water had risen upon the last occasion. It was many feet above the alluvial land on the north side of the stream at this point; hence any attempts at cultivation so low down would stand the risk of total destruction during those floods. Nothing can exceed, however, the richness of the soil upon these flat lands. In many places they are two or three miles broad, extending for twice that distance along the bank of the river, and are composed of from ten to twenty feet deep of virgin soil, almost quite clear of heavy timber, and ready for the plough.

Above the flat lands subject to those floods is the commencement of a township called Seymour, well situated, and having some tolerably good houses already finished, and several which had been begun and abandoned. Even in this embryo township all improvements were suspended; and those of the working classes who still remained crowded round the lucky gold-diggers who had returned from Mount Alexander, and listened to their tales with greedy ears and wondering eyes, occasionally ejaculating that they would soon be off and try their luck also. As we were now journeying more distant from the immediate vicinity of the mines, we indulged in the hope that we should find more order and less excitement among the people; but at this place there was little abatement in the *furore* which greeted the arrivals from other parts, and we saw little prospect of enjoying a comfortable night's rest at the only inn the place could boast of. Certainly, the men were civil enough; but it will be easily imagined that when so many of the inhabitants had only returned for a short time to their old quarters to spend their gold during the Christmas holidays, by indulging in drunken excesses at the inn, that place would be any thing but desirable to put up at. In such cases it is quite a relief to enjoy the quiet repose of a temporary bush gunya, with a blazing log-fire, not to mention that you escape also from the high charges of the innkeepers, who do not miss the golden opportunity of making

you pay smartly. About half a mile, therefore, beyond this village, or commencement of a town, we bivouacked close to the river side. Our party, upon this occasion, indulged themselves, in addition to the usual bush fare, with what are called "Leatherjackets,"—an Australian bush term for a thin cake made of dough, and put into a pan to bake with some fat. The term is a very appropriate one, for tougher things cannot well be eaten; however, with our keen appetites, we found them very good, and persons who cannot make a hearty meal on such tough fare should not venture any great distance from home. The Americans indulge in this kind of bread, giving them the name of "Puff ballooners," the only difference being that they place the cake upon the bare coals, which we do not consider so good a plan as that adopted by the Australian bushmen.

Our next stage on the road was at a place called Middlemass, which will be seen on the map to be about twenty-six miles from the Goulburn River, and forty-four miles from the Broken River, the next stream of importance you come to. This place is merely a roadside public-house, which, before the road was so thronged, was large and good enough for the passing traveller. Now, however, the landlord finds his tap-customers the best payers, and neglects accommodating his gentlemen visitors for his more profitable trade over the bar. Consequently, as we did the night previous, we bivouacked in the bush, about three miles beyond the inn, where we found a small creek with good water in it, and plenty of feed for our horses.

At this spot we joined a party bent upon the same errand as ourselves, instead of encountering the disagreeables to be met with at the public-house. The evening was fine, and as we approached them we heard a voice merrily singing a song. They proved to be a party on their way from the Murray River to Mount Alexander. They were four in number; one of them had with him his young son, and told us that he was possessed of considerable property, not only as a squatter but as a proprietor of land within the settled boundary. His two neighbours, the others of the party, having resolved to try their fortunes at the diggings, he came with them not so much for gain as because he would not be left behind. The other two

were men who possessed property likewise, although of less amount; but their object was specific. They were fully bent on realising some of the extraordinary sums which were said to be amassed by lucky diggers. One of them was a tall powerful man about six feet two, perhaps more. He was apparently very active for so large a man; he had, they said, a little native blood in his veins; if so, he proved in his person what a fine race of men the interior of Australia can produce, and that the animal man will not suffer from an amalgamation with the aborigines. The other was a Sussex man; he had been a sailor, and possessed a superior education to the ordinary run of seamen; and he had a fair right to have looked for something better than the position of a schoolmaster in a remote district on the banks of the Murray River, at a place called Boroogo. However, there he had been resident for some years, a useful member of that primitive community, and he informed us was contented, when these great discoveries were made, and the astounding intelligence reached his obscure quarter; once more he trusted his fate to fortune and his own exertions, and he and his party were sanguine of success. They have our best wishes that the fickle goddess may be favourable to them.

Late in the evening a horseman, with not a very prepossessing countenance, came to our fire, and asked permission to remain with us during the night. His request was acceded to; and we soon afterwards wrapped our blankets close round us, turned our feet to the fire, and resigned ourselves to sleep. In the morning, when we all got up, we found to our surprise that this late visitor of the previous night had departed when all was still, and what was worse, the four horses of the Murray party were not to be seen; and as three of them were old bush horses, accustomed to remain about their carts, it was feared that the stranger had abused the hospitality he had received, and decamped with some of the animals. Horse-stealing, or as it is sometimes delicately expressed among the gold-diggers, "borrowing a horse," is not uncommon in these times, and you cannot be too much on the alert where so many thousands are travelling, of all and sundry characters. The unceremonious departure of the stranger was calculated

to attach suspicion to him, though it turned out unjustly so. In searching for them we went far around the forest in vain; at length a cry down the creek from some of the party informed us that they were seen not far distant from our encampment, where they had strayed to a green spot to find some better feed. The party from the Murray soon after pursued their journey towards their destination, Mount Alexander; and with the reader's permission we will now direct our steps towards Violet valley, where there is another township, distant from Middlemass about twenty-five miles.

After passing through the latter place, the character of the country is of an inferior description for many miles. It, however, improves as you go on; and when at the end of your journey you reach Violet town, you find it situated in a most delightful spot, and its vicinity well covered with grass, having abundance of water. This town contains but few houses, which no doubt will increase as the country becomes peopled, for it certainly is a lovely spot for a quiet residence; and there is every likelihood of it keeping pace with the most flourishing inland towns, should the report of the government surveyor prove correct, that the ranges in its vicinity are richly auriferous.

In this neighbourhood we were informed that the aboriginal natives are still numerous, although they are lessening in number every year, until ultimately they will disappear altogether. We cannot think of these poor people without pain and deep regret; and sometimes a doubt crosses our mind, whether, nationally speaking, we have adopted the course towards them which was due to ourselves to have done. In this province of Victoria many of them have been made useful as constables, shepherds, stockmen, and otherwise. And at Sydney we were informed by a respectable squatter from New England that for many years he had found them most valuable. He, however, told us that he treated them just as he would treat a white man—*he paid them;* and thus he made it their interest to labour steadily; so that with him, and others who have acted as he has done, they have served well. This being the case in certain instances, there can be no reason why, if people act justly towards them, similar satisfactory results should not fol-

low in each of their cases. It would not be the least interesting consequence of this wonderful discovery of gold in the midst of their own lands, if it were the occasion of saving the remnant of what we must call these interesting children of the forest. In many cases the settlers' necessities will compel them to take what labour it is possible to obtain. Let them be just to the poor savage, and they may find labour and assistance where they least expected it. As an instance of the usefulness of these poor creatures, we knew of a gentleman who had come from South Australia to purchase cattle in New South Wales, and who drove them overland to Adelaide, assisted by ten of the Murray River blacks. His plan of treatment to them was similar to that in the other instance we have related. He dealt with them in the manner *they themselves considered just.*

The distance from Violet town to the next township, named Benalla, on the Broken River, is a long eighteen miles. After you are two or three miles on the road, it takes you for the remainder of the way through a level open forest; the soil generally of indifferent quality and but thinly grassed, and some few miles a coarse sandy clay, full of shallow hollows, in which water remains for a time: at this season, however, they were dried up. This latter description of land is what the colonists term "honeycomb" ground, and is very unsafe to ride over. Occasionally you come to and cross over water-courses, in which there are small ponds in the summer, and impassable torrents in the winter. At the time we crossed them they were mostly dry; and it appeared to us not to be a well-watered country, nor did we notice the appearance of any commencement of a homestead during our journey. The day was very fine, rather too warm an hour or two after mid-day; but the morning and evening were pleasantly cool.

As you approach Benalla the country improves, and there is much good soil near the Broken River, over which there is a wooden bridge communicating between the town on both sides of the river. This town and its surrounding district has the most thriving appearance of any we had yet passed on the road. By the census of 1851 its police

district contained 3060 inhabitants; 2106 males, and 954 females. The town itself possesses some excellent hotels and well-built stores and dwelling-houses, mostly of sawn timber. It is very much scattered, the flat land on the bank of the river being subject to floods, upon which were fine trees, giving a character to the position of the town which was pleasing. The district all around was said to be well pastured, and had good fattening properties for cattle. All we saw about the place had the most encouraging appearance. We met several gentlemen, and others of very respectable and substantial look; and we were informed they were the neighbouring squatters and farmers up and down the river. Of course this place suffered from the loss of its working men in common with all other quarters.

The next stage on the road is to the Ovens River, distant from Benalla thirty-two miles, having about half-way on the road the most miserable public-house we had seen on our travels; it is called the "Fifteen-mile Creek" inn, that being the distance between it and the place we had left. The intermediate country is very fair, and much of it tolerably well grassed. Before arriving at the Ovens you pass over some moderately high hills; and though the country is generally open forest-land, yet there are occasionally belts of scrub, with iron-bark and stringy-bark trees. Sometimes also you see post-and-rail fences, and now and then encounter a shepherd with his flock of sheep; all indicating that the country has a large population. A shepherd with his dog, to whom we spoke as he was crossing the road, informed us that he was making a short-cut to a station some ten miles above the town of Benalla on the Broken River. Again, we also met a number of drays proceeding to Melbourne with wool, and horsemen and pedestrians bound for the same destination. In fact, with such substantial signs of occupation, you do not feel that you are passing through what in England is thought to be nothing but a desolate wilderness. No doubt the absence generally speaking of architectural objects, to make a pleasing landscape, are wanting. Forests of the never-failing gum, day after day, interest but little; and we can quite understand many people in such a situation feeling painfully

isolated and lonely, and then becoming melancholy. Fortunately we were not of this temperament; we bore what we could not help, and made the best of every thing. And we beg to recommend all those who are of a different or gloomy temperament, not to venture into the wilderness of Australia, in which they can not only find little to their taste, but may become oppressed with sadness.

We had proposed to remain for the night at the "Fifteen-mile Creek" inn, and with that intention our horses were put into the shed—here there was no stable; but after taking some refreshment, and finding every thing most unsatisfactory, there being also a disturbance in the house, with every prospect of a general fight, we preferred the chance of a bivouac, and therefore proceeded for a few miles from the inn, and took up our quarters for the night at a convenient spot where some wagoners were, and made the best of it, not permitting ourselves to be annoyed by the circumstance.

Very early next morning we were saddled and on our journey, having before our departure indulged in a hot pot of tea, and given ourselves a good warming; for we must confess that we felt rather chill upon these occasions just as the day broke. Do what you will to keep up the fire, you will generally find it nearly out by day-light; the first thing therefore to do on awaking is to make it up if you can procure fuel. Your selection of a spot for camping-out must be bad if this cannot be managed; and you should always have a reserve of your overnight's supply of wood for this purpose. Though the days are exceedingly hot in the summer months travelling in this manner overland, yet you will find the nights often cold; and a fire before the sun is up, and even after it a little, is always pleasant and sometimes necessary for comfort. Comfort! we fancy we hear some persons exclaim; was there ever such a misappropriation of the word! And yet, after all, comfort is, we take it, that state of feeling brought about by any means which acts upon your spirits so that you are revived and feel easy. Be this as it may, a good fire at daybreak after camping-out all night in the bush is comfortable. Whilst the fire is blazing cheerily, and your kettle or quart-pot of water standing by to boil, you fetch up your horse and make

all ready for a start. Then you drink a pannikin of tea, and eat heartily of such provisions as you have with you; and after a good warming, or smoke of the pipe, which is so common here, you mount your horse with comfort, and take to the road cheerfully.

The reader must not suppose that there is really a necessity to sleep out between Melbourne and Sydney. As we have said at the outset of our journey, by managing properly as to your stages, accommodation, such as any lady would not object to is always to be obtained. But with regard to ourselves it was a matter of choice for us to "bush it;" and if we were travelling the same journey again, and well provided, we should often prefer it to putting up at some inns, particularly under existing circumstances.

To the Ovens River it is seventeen long miles, passing over tolerably good land, and throughout more than the usual amount of fencing. On the right of the road is a large swamp, and on the left open grassy forest-land, over which flocks of sheep may be seen depasturing; and now and then you get a glimpse of an enclosed paddock under cultivation. The latter portion of the road passes through a very inferior tract of land, and then alternates with another good tract as you approach the Ovens River. This river is a clear rapid stream, about forty yards wide at the crossing-place, and, as the ferryman informed us while we were crossing in his punt, it was sixteen feet deep. At this place is the township of Wangeratta, situated partly on the left bank of the river and partly a little distance from it on a mound, or rising ground higher than the floods rise, which are sometimes very heavy here. On the left bank, the highest part of the town, there is a very comfortable inn, and near it one or two other houses of accommodation. Altogether it is a straggling sort of place, and there is not much attempt at uniformity in the plan of the town, from what we could judge of the position of the buildings. It was said to possess a considerable population; what number we could not exactly ascertain, but it was considered much less than Benalla. Should gold, however, be discovered in the district, of which there was some talk, and in quantities to satisfy the people, they may not be tempted

away. But indeed no one can tell how the population would act under such circumstances. In the meantime the news from Mount Alexander had done its work, as at other towns in the interior, and it may soon become a deserted village. On the northern side of the river the alluvial flats are very broad, and seemingly of good quality of soil: through them are intersected several natural watercourses, which drain off the water during floods; across these are built wooden bridges. We should not call the country very good, though trees are growing there which you see on the best land; but they are not, however, so large as you generally find them. The heat during the day was very oppressive, and we could have enjoyed the influence of the sea-breeze, but we were too far inland for that; this was added to by the parched appearance of the herbage. We do not think it necessary to mention the flocks and herds we met upon every occasion, as it will be taken for granted that the whole country is occupied by squatters, with their sheep and cattle.

From the Ovens River to the Murray River is forty-four miles. Between the two streams is a place called the "Black-dog Creek," where there is a house of accommodation, at which we met with great civility and a clean bed. The landlord had lately finished a small house, to enable him to carry on his business more to the satisfaction of the numerous parties now going past. He has no neighbours about him; but the situation is one upon which a village is likely to grow. For eight miles after you leave the Ovens River your road is through a fine, open, well-grassed forest, principally of box; after which you enter into and pass over ranges of hills for nearly the whole remaining distance. This is a very indifferent and barren tract of country, having upon it the usual descriptions of inferior trees, and consisting of rocky ridges of quartz-rock, ironstone, &c., with scarcely any feed for cattle in the valleys below. In the lap of these ranges, however, there is a little oasis, where some solitary settler has built a cottage upon a patch of fine land. The people at this place informed us that the country improved lower down; which we found to be the case, and well watered, with large box-trees, which indicate the presence of good land. Then

follows a tract of inferior country, leading again into a fine country well wooded and grassed. In many places there are spots which greatly please you, and the sight of which give life to the road.

As you approach the Murray River you wind round some hills and rather undulating country, and at length you arrive at the site of the new township of Wodenga. The spot is well chosen,—a rising ground above the possibility of floods, which are sometimes tremendous on this Mississippi of the Australian continent. Behind it are some picturesque hills, and well wooded. Between it and the Murray there are two miles of alluvial land, also well and finely timbered; this is liable to be flooded, and through it are many deep water-courses, over one of which a bridge was lately carried away by a flood. It is a matter of wide speculation to grope into the future; but if this township of Wodenga was to become the terminus of a railway from Melbourne, as we suggested at the commencement of this chapter, it would be a place of great importance in the colony of Victoria, as it is the northernmost township in the province; while Albury, on the opposite side of the river, is the most southern town of New South Wales; the Murray, which flows between, being the boundary of the two colonies, as will be seen on the annexed map. Wodenga is therefore 211 miles from Melbourne, and Albury 379 miles from Sydney. We had some difficulty in fording the back water-course of the river, which we were compelled to do in consequence of the accident to the bridge; and unless we had had the assistance of a native, who directed us which way we should incline when we were in the water, we might have failed in getting safely over. There is inconvenience certainly, if not danger, in crossing such places with one horse; but with another leading, as was the case with us, the matter is increased. Such, however, are the incidents by flood and field, which are not much thought of in a new country; so we laughed when we got across the river without any further mishap, and sat down in the comfortable inn at Albury with increased enjoyment, as it had been difficult to reach it.

On referring to the map, it will be seen that we have

arrived at the northern boundary of the province of Victoria, and having crossed the Murray River, we had entered the territory of New South Wales. The present boundary of the colony is the same which defined its extent when it was known as the district of Port Philip, and a dependency of New South Wales. Before its separation from that colony and its erection into an independent province of the British empire, the colonists petitioned the imperial government to extend the territory of the future province as far north as the Murrumbidgee river,—which will be seen on the map to include a large tract of country,—and to the westward as far as Lake Alexandrina, in South Australia, annexing the lake-country between, thus forming a natural boundary in that direction, instead of the present artificial line drawn in the meridian of 141° east longitude. The claims of the Port Philip colonists to this additional territory are, that the settlers within that distance and beyond the official boundary, ship their produce at their ports, and receive supplies from their towns; in fact, all their interests are immediately connected with the colony of Victoria, although they have to pay their taxes to the adjoining colonies of South Australia and New South Wales. It was too much, however, to grant to this already wealthy district; and there has been no extension or alteration of the old boundaries since separation was acceded to. This was an act of justice on the part of the government towards this young colony, which its growing importance demanded; for her substance was annually drained from her treasury by the New South Wales government, and applied to the general purposes of the whole colony; and it will be readily supposed that the "old lady" kept the largest share for her own improvements.

In spite of this and other drawbacks which cramped the energies of the colonists, this favoured section of Australia continued to prosper in a degree unparalleled in the history of British colonisation; and to shew that she only wanted separation to develope still more her pastoral resources, we have seen that she doubled the value of her exports during the first year of her independence: from 7*l.* 10*s.* per head of population it rose to 15*l.*, being as

many pounds as it is shillings in the majority of the British colonies; and this, it must be remembered, was prior to the recent gold-discoveries; hence the statement shews more clearly that it will in future exhibit the general capabilities of this province for the maintenance of a large and prosperous community without the extraneous product of gold. Its greater fertility of soil, its richer pasture-lands, its possessing more permanent streams, and, above all, its central position in the midst of this group of colonies, marked it out from its first settlement, in our opinion, as destined to be the most successful of the Australian dependencies; and with these incalculable treasures in the midst of its rich pastoral and agricultural lands, we are not talking extravagantly when we predict that this province will take the lead in the great future that is opening up for Australia. Already we may consider that her population equals that of the elder colony of New South Wales; and it is in vain that the neighbouring colonies endeavour to stem the tide of emigration from their shores to its favoured strand, for the influx of immigration during the year 1852, from the mother country alone, exceeded 50,000; enough, we think, to neutralise any bad effects which might influence the body politic from the arrival of foreigners from other lands.

This is as it should be; and the response both the government and the people of England have made to the cry of the colonists to come and help them will be received with gratitude by them; for although in the dearth of labour which has so suddenly overwhelmed them, they welcome strangers from other lands who come to their relief, yet they cannot assimilate with them as they would wish in their domestic relations. They are aliens to that national individuality which so strongly marks the subject of the British empire; besides, their habits and customs jar with the homely observances, and their opinions clash with the time-honoured institutions which our countrymen have planted, and which have taken so deep a root in our Australian colonies. Hitherto there has been nothing to fear from the political bearing of the colonists themselves, notwithstanding the hue and cry of certain fire-brand agitators, whom the colonists reckon the mere froth and scum

of their pitcher of humanity. This may not always be the case, if the colonial minister refuses the privileges of self-government to those subjects at the antipodes, which every Englishman looks upon as his birthright. As long as these regions promised to be no more than a pastoral country, with a thinly-spread population of shepherds and stockmen, the question was one of small importance; but now that the far-seeing politician begins to descry upon the horizon of futurity certain glimpses of a great national superstructure rising upon the foundation of these infant colonies, it is time for the magnates of the Colonial Office to be watchful of coming events. Already this newly-found treasure is attracting bands of adventurers from all possible parts of the earth, where the news has spread like wildfire. Cast your eyes thitherward on the seas of the southern hemisphere, and you will see what a fleet of foreign sails are directing their course to our Australian possessions. On they come, men from all lands, conversing in different tongues, yet mingling in one pursuit; for the watchword of their mission, in whatever language uttered, means, Gold! gold! As time rolls on, may not these fleets increase, and the importation of foreigners materially affect the political bias of the community? It behoves, therefore, the ministers of the Crown to use their utmost zeal in the cause of their Queen and country, to retain these possessions undisturbed, by granting liberal measures to the colonists, and enlarging their community by a wholesome supply of good and loyal subjects,—by sending men whom the colonists should delight in having as husbands for their daughters, and women who would prove affectionate wives to their sons, so that the future race of Anglo-Australians may equal in mental vigour and bodily strength the stock from whence they sprung.

CHAPTER XI.

OVERLAND THROUGH NEW SOUTH WALES.

The Murray River system of waters—Description of the country through which the Murray flows—The town of Albury—Favourable dispersion of the gold deposits—Its beneficial effects on the inland towns—Murrumbidgee district—Desolating effects of droughts—Necessity for the colonists to husband the water—Proposal to navigate the Murray—Prospectus of a steamboat company—Murrumbidgee district—The inn at Mullengendra—Strachan and Gabbett's station—Inns at Massey and Kiamba—Tarcutta—Aborigines—Natives hunting the bee—Township of Tarcutta—Road to Gundagai—Murrumbidgee river—Town of Gundagai—The Tumut river—Cooloek crossing—Ingion creek and village—Topography of the Murrumbidgee river.

At this stage of our journey we had reached the upper branch of that great stream, the Murray River, which drains the western flank of the Australian cordillera, and forms a system of waters which extends in its ramifications over an area of not less than 1400 miles from north to south, and 400 miles from east to west, covering upwards of half a million of square miles of this island-continent, or a district five times the area of the British Isles. This basin, as it is termed, of the Murray River system includes all the largest rivers in south-eastern Australia: the upper Murray, or Hume, which we had just crossed, taking its rise in the Australian Alps, and receiving the waters of the Goulburn, the Ovens, the Loddon, and other rivers to the south and south-east; the Murrumbidgee and the Lachlan having their feeders stretching along the western flank of the dividing range on the east coast for several hundred miles; and the Darling flowing from the north for a thousand miles through the sandy desert in the interior, and deriving its source in the tropical latitudes on the east coast. These arms unite, and at the junction below the Darling form the lower Murray—a river which may justly rank among

the great ones of the world—flowing in a mighty navigable stream for several hundred miles, until it spreads out into the shallow estuary of Lake Alexandrina, which finally disembogues into Encounter Bay in the territory of South Australia, without even a safe boat-channel through its entrance from the Southern Pacific Ocean.

If this vast region was not liable to great droughts, it would be among the most fertile lands in the world. The aborigines, as well as the settlers, look forward to the return of the periodical rains, which fill the creeks and lagoons, and give life to all nature, with the greatest anxiety; for they would appear not to be certain, and the effects produced by them are oftentimes of a calamitous nature. Like many of the Australian rivers, the Murray from this cause frequently becomes a dry bed, its course can only be traced at some spots in the dry seasons by a succession of small lagoons or water-holes, as they are familiarly termed by the settlers. For many miles also it is said to pass between high cliffs of sand and clay, intersected with belts of brushwood and sterile forest-land, and also very flat plains, not favourable for agricultural or even pastoral purposes. We do not apply this description to the tract of land we passed through on the road to the crossing-place, for certainly the approach to the river from either side is most cheering, and delights the eye of the traveller beyond measure. It is lower down the stream, towards the desolate interior, that the poor land we have mentioned is to be found; higher up again amongst the mountains from whence it derives its source the country is described to be charmingly picturesque, and possessing all that is requisite for man or beast. At the crossing-place here the river is not more than a hundred and twenty yards broad and ten feet deep, having a very rapid stream, which we crossed with some difficulty in a punt.

Albury, as already mentioned, is on the north side of the river, situated on its bank above the highest flood-mark. It has some very good brick and weather-board houses, several houses of accommodation, amongst which is an excellent hotel, and a number of shops and stores, besides a place of worship, and a court-house, where a court of petty sessions is held; in short, it is the com-

mencement of a very good country town, with several hundred inhabitants, shewing indications of prosperity notwithstanding the desertions to the gold-fields. It is the centre of an extensive pastoral country in the Murrumbidgee district, well occupied with squatting stations and a few agricultural farms. The produce of its environs, and the surrounding country on the north side of the Murray River, passes through the town on its way to Melbourne, the nearest market and outport; and the traffic has of course made the place what it is. Although the town of Albury is within the colony of New South Wales, still the inhabitants feel that they are, from this circumstance, members of the Victoria community rather than of the older colony. It is 379 miles distant from Sydney, with which it has postal communication twice a week; and this may be said to be all the regular traffic it has with the capital of the province in which it is situated. As the population increases, and if people do not abandon industrious pursuits entirely in this neighbourhood, it must become a place of considerable importance. This, however, depends upon the course of events; there is no question but that there is a field at this locality for the employment of thousands of industrious people.

At the time we passed through the town there was the greatest excitement occasioned by the announcement that gold had been discovered on the "Black Range," a group of hills distant from the town some four miles; and there were stated to be already several men at work. Such announcements did not surprise us much, for there is no question but that the whole of this region through which the road passes between Melbourne and Sydney is more or less auriferous, which has been almost verified by the explorations of Messrs. Hargreaves and Clark, who are employed for this purpose by the New South Wales government. If our humble judgment also may be taken into account, we may state that we often noticed localities externally the same as the auriferous country around Mount Alexander; in fact, if quartz is to be taken as a certain indication of the presence of the precious metal, the indications were frequently most favourable; who can say, then, that internally these localities will not prove as rich?

It is of the greatest moment to the well-being of the community that these riches should be found spread generally throughout the land, as that circumstance will prevent many townships and densely-peopled districts from being deserted. Every one must be aware, that if all the able-bodied men abandon the pursuits which hitherto have maintained the population in plenty and comfort for this gold-digging, it will become a serious matter for the former employers of labour. The owners of houses in these small towns were beginning to look very blank, when they saw so many of their tenants leaving them empty to people other localities. This shifting of the population will bring about many curious changes, and like the canvass cities of the wandering Arab, a town here to-day may be gone to-morrow. All we trust is, that these changes will be for the general benefit of the community; for it is clear that if gold-digging should really become the most profitable occupation for the labourer, most men will follow it in preference to ordinary pursuits. To prevent the evil effects which must follow therefrom to the community at large, it would be a wise scheme on the part of the government to enlarge the currency by establishing a mint; a step which we think would lessen the value of this product, and therefore raise other commodities, thereby preventing any injurious effects to the pastoral and agricultural interests.

The distance from Albury to the Murrumbidgee River is about 120 miles. The tract of country you pass through is generally fine, and in some parts very beautiful; still there is a sameness to much that we have hitherto described. Here an open forest country, there extensive grassy plains; now we cross a river, and again we ford a creek, or leap our horses across the dry water-courses. It is also, in common with many other districts in the colony of New South Wales, subject to seasons of the severest droughts; and we were informed that when such a dreadful season occurs, you may have to travel many miles without being able to obtain a drop of water either for yourself or your poor animals, and that every thing like herbage is then entirely burnt up, the country presenting a perfect desert, in which neither man nor beast can live. Those spots where there are springs which flow throughout the driest year, are, as

it may be supposed, invaluable. Such a season as it was our fortune to be favoured with in 1852 is seldom experienced. But even in this most favoured of years we passed over many water-courses which were not running, and even frequently found them dried up. Though these droughts are sometimes very dreadful in their effects upon live stock, yet they seldom prove injurious to man. Generally speaking, there is always more or less a deficiency of water in the summer season, as you get away from the mountains, and occasionally amongst them when you are some distance from the larger streams or rivers; yet so fearful a visitation as that which occurred the summer previous to the one we passed through had not been known for thirty years. We were informed by a man who had been a resident in this region for more than that period, that it was a desolating occurrence which happily seldom came; for although there was at times a scarcity of this useful element, yet the country was well watered and all that man could desire. *That* year, however, he described as a fearful one; every where throughout the district thousands of cattle perished for want of water; and it was impossible to keep the famished animals upon their respective runs, for they would stray away for miles in search of it. That also an immense proportion of them were lost by being smothered in the deep water-holes into which they rushed; and many got bogged and finally smothered on the borders of muddy lagoons, in struggling towards the water to quench their thirst.

There can be no doubt but that to husband the water, of which one year with another plenty falls in Australia, is of the greatest importance to New South Wales; and that how to effect so important an object, to save the people from the terrific suffering and enormous losses occasioned by these droughts, demands the utmost consideration of the legislature of that colony. And we cannot but think that if the people of Sydney and elsewhere were to direct their energies to the real improvement of the country,—such as remedying what is required, viz. the want of water, the repair of the roads, and the construction of bridges, besides keeping such as have been made in repair,—in place of wasting their time in party contests, they would be

doing more good for themselves and the public generally. No one can pass through New South Wales but must observe that the roads, which have been constructed by convict-labour, are now becoming almost impassable; and the question of how they are to be kept in repair must weigh heavily upon the consideration of those whose duty it is to think of such matters. The men loudest in their complaints are ever those who have deprived the government of the labour which it will be found in these golden times impossible, we fear, to supply. We are not going to enter here into the prisoner question, nor do we intend to advocate the renewal of transportation; the general government of the empire have given up the point, and we think it should strictly keep faith with the colonists. But we may perhaps be permitted to observe, that we are under an impression that, if the *defects of the system* had been pointed out and remedied—such as employing the prisoners solely as the pioneers of civilisation—not only would great advantages have been conferred upon the community at the present crisis, but that their morality, of which they are so apprehensive, would not have been in any danger. We may be in error in venturing these remarks in the face of so much determined opposition in the colonies; but they are given in the spirit of good feeling for the moral and general welfare of the Australian people.

Before we leave the banks of the Murray for the north, it may interest many persons to be informed that it has been proposed to attempt its navigation with a steamboat one hundred and fifty feet long and twenty-six feet beam, to be built and launched—states a prospectus in circulation in Adelaide—at Goolwa, or some other adjacent convenient spot, and there to be fitted with her engines and stores; to be propelled by one of Penn's forty-horse power oscillating engines, with double cylinders; to have double stern-posts and rudders, to enable her to come round quickly in the shorter reaches of the river, and the steering apparatus fixed forward; to have sails to assist occasionally. The boat to have a very commodious after-cabin for passengers, and likewise accommodation forward for steerage.

Her velocity against the stream with a twenty-one inch

draught of water is calculated at six miles an hour under ordinary circumstances; and, at this draught, she will have on board the engine-boiler, one and a half days' fuel, stores, and complement of hands. During the wool-carrying season the boat to be used as a steam-tug, in addition to carrying cargo, and to tow a certain number of lighters carrying the wool.

The tonnage is estimated at 200, from which is to be deducted the engine and boiler-room, and the stowage for fuel.

It is proposed, at the outset, that the steamboat shall not go higher than the River Darling junction, where there is to be a depôt established, with screws for pressing the wool, and, if expedient, boiling-down works.

The extension of steam-communication to the Murrumbidgee junction, or beyond or up the Darling, to be carried out hereafter, as circumstances develop themselves, and for which a smaller steamer will be necessary.

Immediate receiving depôts to be established where desirable, between the Goolwa and the Darling,—say, for example, Ngarto and Moorundee; and also wooding-stations at intervals of 100 miles. Port Elliot and Goolwa respectively to have warehouses for receiving wool and goods, using the railway intended to be established between these points as a means of transit, on such terms per ton per mile as may hereafter be settled.

The time of starting on the first trip to be, say first week of August, and to continue running for seven months; then to be laid up in ordinary, with a reduced complement of hands, unless sufficient traffic should present itself to warrant a longer period, or unless for intermediate or occasional trips.

The voyage from Goolwa to the Darling will occupy seven days, and say the return voyage six, the complete trip thirteen days, and one day detained at the Darling depôt; but to allow something extra, say two trips per calendar month on the average.

The operations of a carrying company, if successful, might be extended to the steam country trade, or in co-operation with the steamers now stated to be about to run from Sydney to various coasting parts.

The carriage between Port Elliot and Port Adelaide to be a separate item of arrangement and charge, because it cannot be known how much may stop at Port Elliot for shipment direct; much must depend upon the harbour and the season. The quantity of flour carried up will probably decrease in course of time, as the country is opened up and cleared, as parties will grow their own grain; but other things will increase, and so compensate. Great part of the Wimmera district, extending down to Lake Hindmarsh, will be opened up. Drays going to the Darling from Adelaide occupy about six weeks for the journey, and the charge per ton is about 12*l.*, and the distance by land is about 330 miles.

The resolution of the legislature restricting the draught of water of the first steamboat to two feet might be increased; and to this the evidence of all the writings and reports, and the suggestions of Captain Freeling and Mr. Torrens, go.

Even if the scheme as a commercial one failed (a thing not very probable), the expenditure would not all be lost; there would be the boat and its engines, fit for navigating the Gulf in fine weather. Melbourne is about 350 miles from the junction of the Darling; sometimes a dray is six months going and returning.

What has been the result of this proposition we have not heard; our object will be attained if, in laying it before the reader, we succeed through it in conveying to him what are the supposed capabilities of these waters in the interior, and what is going forward in such remote places.

Leaving Albury, the road passes through the Murrumbidgee district, the largest squatting district in New South Wales, and watered by the largest rivers in Australia. Before the gold-discovery it contained about 3000 inhabitants, not more than one-fourth of whom were females. In 1846 the stock comprised in this district was 2646 horses, 94,671 head of horned cattle, 800 pigs, and 373,000 sheep. The first twenty miles of the road is through a flat grassy country, which is said to be more favourable for breeding than fattening cattle; at the same time there are a few stations where fat beeves are sent from, particularly those

on the Billibong Creek, which flows through the middle of the district from east to west.

A short distance from the town you pass by a race-course, with a stand of the most primitive construction; it, however, shews a beginning of this genuine English amusement in the far interior, and evinces the taste of the inhabitants. The country is not densely wooded, but there are a sufficient number of trees for ornament, amongst which we noticed the box, bastard apple-tree, white and red gums, and some stringy-bark, which grew mostly on the hilly grounds. When about fifteen miles on the road, you see a remarkable mountain on your left, about seven miles to the westward; it is called "Table Top." A very few years since it was a good object to direct the traveller; now, however, there is no need of that, the road being excellent and well defined.

In five miles more you arrive at Mullengendra, Mr. Dimmock's inn, situated a short distance off the road. It is by far the largest and most complete establishment of the kind we had seen in the interior; Mr. Dimmock has erected a blacksmith's, a tailor's, a shoemaker's, and a carpenter's shop. His house is a neat weather-boarded cottage, with a verandah, and a detached kitchen, which is so necessary in this hot climate. Altogether it is one of the cleanest and most comfortable little places to stop at that can be imagined; and you feel inclined to linger about the spot and view the surrounding country, which is very pretty and picturesque. Passing onwards for two miles, the scenery retains the same pleasing character, when your road leads you in great part for the next seven or eight miles over a rough hilly country, crossing some barren stony ridges on the way. You then come to an out-station on a sheep-run, belonging to Mr. Dixon, called Woomargama, which consists of a shepherd's hut, and hurdle-yards for the sheep. John Duke, the shepherd at this station, was very poorly off with regard to house-accommodation and the creature comforts, but he was rich in civility. It may give the reader some further idea of the working of the gold fever in these localities, by our stating that this man had made up his mind, and was then making arrangements,

to proceed to the gold-fields at Braidwood, taking with him his wife, his daughter, and two sons, fine active young fellows, who were serving as shepherds under the same employer as their father. In the event of his carrying out his intention, it will prove a serious matter for Mr. Dixon, as he would find it difficult to supply the places of such a useful family.

There is much of this country enclosed with fences, principally for horse-paddocks, which are always an indication of the advanced condition of the settlers; and on the banks of the streams there are a few fields enclosed and under cultivation. The hills we were crossing proved to be the Mullengendra range, a spur from the Australian Alps, which divides the waters of the Billibong from the Murray; the former giving its name to the extensive tract of land between the latter and the Murrumbidgee. From hence to Messrs. Strachan and Gabbett's station at the junction of the Burnet and the Billibong creeks is sixteen miles, the country between being partly hilly and partly undulating and level forest-land; it is well adapted for sheep, and in our journey we passed several large flocks, with their attendant shepherds. The land upon the banks of the Billibong is a very deep rich alluvial soil, and we never saw stronger-looking oats than those which grew at Strachan and Gabbett's station; they were really more like reeds than straw in their stems. This is a squatting-station; the proprietors have a sufficiently good house and out-offices for all purposes requisite in the bush, besides large paddocks well enclosed with post-and-rail fences, for horses and entire stock, and smaller ones for cultivation. The river or creek, as it is termed, passes through their run. Lower down is the tract of country so well known for its richness and liability to severe droughts. This particular locality, and for twelve miles over which the road passes, is truly beautiful, not having more trees than are sufficient for ornament, and presenting a perfect picture of what we have termed the park-like scenery of Australia. Here and there the otherwise monotonous aspect of the forest is relieved by large open spaces thickly grassed, with cattle and sheep feeding thereon. You also cross several alluvial flats, where the kangaroo grass grows as high as

your saddle-girths, which is said to be possessed of good fattening properties for all kinds of stock; but the proprietors of the station we had left occupied their land entirely as a cattle-run. We have much pleasure in recording the civility and attention they paid us on our calling at their homestead.

Twelve miles farther on you arrive at Massey, a roadside public-house, situated in a very badly watered locality, and having not much pretension to comfort. At this spot, during the great drought of 1850-51, a well was sunk eighty-five feet deep before water was obtained. The distance between this public-house and Kiamba—much such another place—is seven miles; the country is more scrubby than the previous twelve miles from the Billibong, and though it is well grassed, yet it was said not to possess very fattening properties. The inn at Kiamba is a better situation for a public-house than Massey, as it possesses a spring of excellent water, which has never been known to fail. The great value of water those alone know who have suffered from the absence of it, and witnessed its dreadful effects upon man and beast in the arid regions of Australia. We cannot help repeating again our convictions on this matter, for to secure it in these upper regions of New South Wales is the great question for solution by the colonists. And whenever we hear of them wasting their time in premature discussions, often without just cause, concerning their liberties, and what they call their grievances, and see that they neglect essential things, such as we have named, we not only lament that men should permit morbid feelings to govern them at the expense of the country, but we have some doubts of the political talent claimed by these agitators of the Australian community. We are strongly impressed with the opinion that these patriotic gentlemen frequently take up the cudgels of politics against the government, more to gratify their own vanity and turbulent dispositions than from any utility they expect from the measures they advocate. These remarks are not put forward to raise political discussion; but as a passing traveller, apart from local prejudices, we could not but see the neglect with which things of the greatest consequence were treated, while matters of much less import to the welfare

of the colonists commanded so much attention from the community.

We were well entertained at the public-house at Kiamba, and found the landlord a good sample of his class. He informed us that the house and grounds were the property of Mr. Walker, a merchant at Sydney, who was endeavouring to form an extensive vineyard in that locality, and that they had succeeded in making a tolerably good sort of port wine. From Kiamba to Tarcutta, the commencement of an inland town, it is about seventeen miles, through an open forest country, and in many places pleasingly undulating, and affording rich pasture for sheep and cattle. We saw some fine flocks and herds on our way, besides many horses, which seemed to thrive well in this district. We observed, likewise, abundant indications amongst the quartz formation, which cropped occasionally through the land, that there is great probability of auriferous deposits being found in the vicinity. At one creek in particular, about six miles from Tarcutta, we were confident that gold would be found.

This district, in the early settlement of the country, was thickly peopled by the aborigines; and we thought it extraordinary that we did not see any about. We fear that there is too much truth in the tales occasionally related by the settlers of the fierce contests which occurred between them and the first adventurers across this region, which to a certain extent has thinned them out. It seems strange also that these sharp-sighted children of the forest had not possessed themselves of the golden treasures which were under their feet, for they are covetous of any polished shell or stone, and certainly they possess most extraordinary power of sight. The following description of hunting the bee for honey amongst the tribes of this region may not be uninteresting to many persons; and it is a proof of any thing but stupidity in these unjustly treated natives of Australia.

This pursuit, from all we have heard, seems to possess for the aborigines something more of the feeling of the sportsman than that with which they follow their daily search of hunting for food. In the heat of a summer day they watch this tiny insect (for the bee of Australia is

very much smaller than ours) on the banks of a lagoon, where they come to drink. They have in readiness a particular kind of grass, which they put between their teeth, and having previously taken a mouthful of water, they discharge, through the grass, a small shower like dew over the bee, which drenches their little victim, when it is carefully withdrawn from the water, otherwise uninjured, on the point of a stick. They are prepared with a little bag of a kind of pipe-clay or fuller's earth, with which to dry their fingers, and render them more fit for the very delicate process they are now to commence. A single fibre of a fine down, found under the wing of the eagle-hawk, is dipt into the glutinous juice of a particular herb they have in readiness, also carefully preserved. But the heat of the sun has dried the bee, and it begins to plume its little wings. The discharge of small rain is again ejected over him. The minute operation of attaching the little streamer of down is now proceeded with; it soon dries, and off he flies, winging his way direct to his hive, scarcely encumbered with the unusual floating tail.

The halloo is now given, and the whole tribe, with loud shouts, *keeping the game in view*, follow it in full cry, till fairly lodged in the hive, which is sometimes at a considerable distance, and generally in the top of a very high tree without a branch, except those that make the summit.

One of them now ascends the smooth stem, making small notches in the bark with his tomahawk, till he has formed a ladder, by which he reaches the branches, and soon plunders the store at the top. His descent with his liquid prize is still more critical, having to feel his frail footsteps below him; for a fall from such a height would inevitably prove fatal.

We could mention many other instances of their keenness and perseverance as hunters, and their expertness at the use of their weapons, besides their capabilities of being taught ordinary bush occupations, which would go far to refute the condemnation of being devoid of intelligence, under which they suffer. It is our hope that some solid advantages may accrue to them in consequence of the great changes taking place throughout the labour-market of these colonies.

Tarcutta is the commencement of what will probably be a considerable country town. There is already a small nucleus of well-built brick houses, around which it is likely to congregate; and like its neighbours already passed on the road, it possesses some good inns and stores. It has postal communication with Sydney every Tuesday and Friday. The creek upon the banks of which it is built is a strong running stream for nine months in the year, and it has never been known to fail. A few miles above this embryo town, towards the source of the stream, at a place where the veteran colonist, Mr. M'Arthur, formerly had a station, it is always a clear running brook the whole year round; and at the crossing-place it was so deep that we were almost afraid we should have to swim our horses over. Altogether this part of the Murrumbidgee district is well watered, whatever the rest may be; and this fact was shewn to be constant, from the luxuriance of the forest and pastoral vegetation around.

From Tarcutta to Gundagai, the next post-town, is about thirty-five miles; having, when we crossed the country, only one small public-house, kept by Mr. Cater, about seven miles on the road. Since then another license has been granted for a house seven miles still farther on. On the left of the road, after you leave Tarcutta, there is a long swamp; and throughout the whole distance it may be considered a better cattle than a sheep country. Although the scenery of the country as you pass along appears full of the varieties of hill and dale, still there is nothing striking in it for the eye of the traveller to rest upon. After leaving Cater's we ascended and crossed over Tarcutta range, which is a most difficult matter for drays to accomplish; and in rainy weather next to impossible for any wheeled carriage, having much of a load, to get over. As we journeyed along up and down the steep pinches and boggy ground, we encountered some bullock-drivers and carters endeavouring to surmount these obstacles with their teams; the cursing and swearing they indulged in occasionally was not very complimentary to the members of the Legislative Council. Descending the range we entered a valley where the country for two or three miles was well clothed with grass, and about that

distance is intersected by a creek running north in the direction of the Murrumbidgee River. A shepherd whom we spoke to, as he was following a fine flock of sheep, informed us that it was called Ellis's Creek. At times he said there rushed down its course tremendous freshes, which overflowed the surrounding plains. To the right of this valley is a tolerably good undulating country, which does not change much in appearance until you come upon the Murrumbidgee River, which opens out before you in all the magnificence of Australian scenery. Large and beautiful natural meadows stretch along its banks, contrasting their verdant hues with the dark-blue surface of the river.

The road is some distance from the river, and you lose sight of it for a few miles, and then you pass over some rather inferior country until you arrive at Mitchell, a little off the road to the left, with this fine river at its back. When you come in sight of the river again the scenery is truly beautiful,—impossible, we thought, to be finer. Here you see it flowing through extensive rich grassed meadows, with a few clumps of trees interspersed over them, and at their back gently sloping ranges covered with verdure, and that open forest-land which indicates fertile soil. The banks of this river, in fact, present a succession of ornamental parks that would vie with the finest forest-lands in the world. At this point you leave the river again, the road passing through alternate patches of fine sheep and cattle country and scrubby tracts, rather hilly, with iron-bark trees. This description of land continues until you reach a small creek, where you again ride over rich soil, and come to enclosed land on each side of the road. You are now about six miles from the town of Gundagai, which you come to on the south side of the river.

Gundagai is situated in the district of Lachlan, 244 miles from Sydney. It stands on the north bank of the Murrumbidgee River, and is built upon a piece of rising ground between the river and its back-water. It has suffered from floods more than any town in Australia, and fears have been entertained by the inhabitants that some day they and their houses may be all swept away. In

1845 they petitioned the government of Sir George Gipps to grant them allotments above these flood-marks; but that governor, true to his policy of increasing the funds of the Treasury, said, that he would be happy to put up new sections of ground for sale upon the spot where it was not subject to those floods, but he could not think of exchanging the old ones for them, for what they had already purchased "they had taken for better for worse."* There

* Since the above was written the catastrophe predicted by the unfortunate inhabitants actually took place in the month of May 1852. The subjoined extract relates the particulars of this deplorable event:

"THE FLOOD AT GUNDAGAI.—'I forward an account of a dreadful flood we have been visited with at Gundagai. Though the river had been rising for some days previous, it was not till late on the night of the 24th that apprehensions were entertained of a high flood.' Several families on the lowest part of the town, on the north bank of the river, moved during Thursday to a place of safety. By Thursday night the river had risen to an alarming height, and the rush of the water became terrific. This continued during the whole of that night and the following day. As daylight broke in on Friday morning, the unavailing cries for assistance became fearfully harassing. Crash after crash announced the fall of some house, and the screams that followed the engulfing of those who clung to it, till the water attained its greatest height, about eleven o'clock at night, and it began to fall at three A.M. on Saturday. Up to this time about thirty-four houses had been washed away, and sixty lives lost. Numbers who were carried away by the stream saved themselves by clinging to trees. I myself was on a tree from eleven on Friday night until about three o'clock on Saturday afternoon. Many were so placed for two nights; some of these were saved, though no doubt several perished from exhaustion. One melancholy instance is that of Miss Hemphill, who on Saturday night was alive in the tree in which on Sunday she was found dead. Those on the high ground exerted themselves to the utmost. Two strangers manned a boat, and took several from the trees,—myself amongst the number. The black fellow, Jackey, belonging to Mr. Andrews, afforded in this respect the most valuable assistance, saving a great many lives. The scenes on the high part, where the remains of the inhabitants are congregated, is truly distressing. At every step you see some one lamenting the dead; here and there the sorrowing remains of what three days before was a large and thriving family. Mr. Thatcher saved himself, but lost eight of his family. Mr. Lindley returned to-day from a journey to Yass, and found the whole of his family swept away. There are few that lived on the flat that have not to lament the loss of some relation; nearly all are penniless. The distress that existed has been relieved as much as possible by the sympathy and kindness of those whose houses and property are uninjured. The generous hospitality of Mr. Norton, chief constable, will ever be remembered by those to whom his house became a home, when they were without shelter, and many almost penniless. Messrs. Caddington, Bourke, Boland, and others with whose names I am acquainted, excited feelings of the most lively gratitude, by their sympathy and kind exertions to relieve all who came on shore. Mr. Morley distributed provisions and blankets, and exerted himself to the

are many good houses in the town, and before the gold-discoveries a considerable population. But this is just one of those places that will lose the body of its people, unless discoveries of gold be made in the neighbourhood, notwithstanding the beauty, extent, and fertility of the country around it. The town itself is surrounded and hemmed in by a range of hills about three miles long by two in breadth. From its position, some persons are inclined to disparage it; we, however, had no such feeling. It is true that we saw it under the most favourable circumstances; nothing could exceed the verdure on the plain or low land for several miles before you reach the township, furnishing abundance of food for sheep and

utmost in getting those saved who were placed in danger. The following is the list of those who were drowned, amounting to sixty-four. The number of houses swept away is about thirty-six: Mr. and Mrs. M'Kenna, of the National School, and five children: Mr. Hunt, saddler, formerly of Parramatta, wife and four children; Mrs. Lindley, of the Rose Inn, and four children, old man, servant man and woman, little girl, woman, and child; Mr. Luff, of the Murrumbidgee, staying at the Rose Inn; Mrs. Thatcher, sen., Miss Thatcher, Mrs. Thatcher, jun., and five children; Mr. Gormly, Mrs. Gormly, daughter, and two sons, and two girls (lodgers); Mr. Scott, butcher, wife and son, and boy (Castleton); Mr. Gerard Hemphill, innkeeper, wife, and four children; Mr. Egerton, tailor, and wife; Mr. Morris and two children; four strangers, staying at Spencer's Inn, from the Lachlan; Williams, servant to Mr. Spencer; Dr. Waugh's servant.'

"Gundagai is, or we may more truly say was, situated on the north bank of the Murrumbidgee. Most of the allotments were on a tongue of land between the river and a creek which separated it from the high land. When the creek and river rose together, as has generally happened, the unfortunate people were cut off from any means of escape. This appears to be the case in the present instance. When the residents were convinced there was danger, and saw the raging river rise to their very doors, the creek prevented them getting to the high lands, and they were compelled to remain until the floods attained sufficient height and strength to wash away their dwellings, and launch them into eternity. Many of the unfortunate individuals who are gone to their last account are much to blame for building in a place which they must have known was liable to be flooded; but the government officers who laid out a township in such a position have a most serious responsibility in this matter. After the township was laid out, application, on the ground of its being exposed to floods, was made to the government to shift the site, and allow those who had purchased allotments to change them; but they were sternly refused. We need do no more than call the attention of our readers to the simple narrative of our correspondent, to enlist their sympathies for the survivors. Many who, before this awful visitation, were in easy circumstances, are now destitute. There can never be a more legitimate call upon the affluent for assistance than the present. Whatever is done should be done quickly."—*Sydney Morning Herald.*

cattle; whereas the year before, the cattle were dying in thousands from the excessive drought. Here, as at other places, nothing was spoken of, thought of, or dreamt of but gold! Alas, poor Industry, what will become of you in the gold-regions of Australia!

The Tumut River, a tributary of the Murrumbidgee, joins it not far from hence. On this river is a mountain called the Bugong mountain, from the native name given to a kind of moth about the size of a humble-bee, which is found in abundance there. The natives feast on this insect when in its grub state at certain seasons, and get fat upon it. The moth in its perfect state is found in the caves round this mountain in vast numbers, along with another of these edible caterpillar-moths, called by them the Jimberroobra.

Ten miles from Gundagai you cross the Murrumbidgee River again at a place called Coollock. For the first three miles on the road you pass over the same description of beautiful meadow-land we have mentioned as seen lower down. These flats, as they are called, reach for several miles, frequently back from the river, where they are bounded by sloping ranges of hills covered with grass, and thinly timbered. Generally speaking, all fertile lands in Australia appear to be characterised by these beautiful features. At this place we crossed the Murrumbidgee from the south to the north bank, and we should say that it was 120 yards wide, and we were told about ten feet deep. The punt we crossed in was very much out of order, like every thing else which we met in our travels requiring labour to keep them in repair, and not immediately connected with the gold mania. There is an inn at this place, and a few cottages on the south bank. After crossing the river, you keep along a range of hills covered with indifferent soil and rough stony ground. In many places, according to our judgment, there were indications of gold. Leaving the river here, you enter again a fine open country, and pass through a broad level valley with a running creek at the bottom. There is plenty of grass and large trees about of the most luxuriant foliage. But beautiful and luxuriant as all vegetation was when we passed through, we were assured that in the previous year every thing was

parched up for many long and weary months; and the cattle, which now looked so well, were then dying by thousands.

This description of country extends for several miles on the road to Jugion creek, distant from Coollock fifteen miles, continuing through a valley in which there is much cultivation, with a solitary dwelling here and there. Heavy torrents sometimes rush down this valley from the "Money money" ranges, in which it is situated, and carry away much of the soil and standing crop. We saw the effect of one of these sudden floods which had occurred a few days previously. To Jugion from there is about nine or ten miles, over a succession of tolerably well-grassed hills, occasionally rough, and in some places thickly timbered. When within about a mile and a half of Jugion, on the right bank of the Murrumbidgee,—of the valley of which you command a fine view—you see the village before you. There are two very indifferent inns in the place, and a few poor-looking houses scattered about; amongst them we passed what was called a blacksmith's shop. It is, however, but the commencement of a village; and should the traffic increase at this part of the road, might become a place of some size, for there is a good deal of fair arable land in its vicinity.

From this point we left the Murrumbidgee River, and pursued our course towards Yass River, a tributary of this stream. Before leaving it, the reader may wish to be informed of its topography. It takes its rise in the Maneroo district, about 250 miles south-west of Sydney, and pursues its course in a tortuous manner for more than 500 miles, when it is said to expand itself over the country until it reaches the marshes of the Lachlan. The country through which it flows is spoken of as possessing great capabilities for stock and agriculture. From what we had an opportunity of seeing of it, our impression was that it fully deserves the praises it has received in such respects. To these advantages we do think that with regard to mineral wealth it may yet be found to equal other districts. Of the river itself, there is more about it which resembles the murmuring streams of the old world than any others we have seen in Australia. The sloping banks, the pebbly beach, laved by the clear waters of this noble stream, all

possess that picturesque and poetic beauty which characterises the rivers of our fatherland. And when in future times the coming generations will build great cities on its banks, and navigate its waters by steamboats, it will not be unlike the Rhine of classic song; and pilgrims from the poverty-stricken lands of the north will be found wandering along its shores to the shrine of gold hidden in the veins of the Australian cordillera.

CHAPTER XII.

DISTRICTS OF YASS AND QUEANBEYAN.

Salubrity of the climate—Australia essentially the poor man's country—Road from Jugion to Yass—Encounter a snake—Jugion creek—Cumbamurro estate—Boorowa River—Boorowa plains—Broughtonsworth estate—Town of Yass—Mr. O'Brien and his estate of Deuro—Town and country visiting—Limestone caves—Inn at the "Gap"—Gungun creek—Winderadeen estate—Altitude of the country—Lake George—The main dividing range—An artist turned shepherd—Canbury plains—Night overtakes us—Danger of crossing swollen rivers—Fate of the Rev. Mr. Gregory—Estate of Yarra Lumla—Estate of Woden—Description of the district of Queanbeyan—Desire of the small settlers to possess land—Return to Winderadeen.

THE observant reader, who has followed us thus far upon our journey, must have noticed that our progress has never been once stopped by the inclemency of the weather, and that we bivouacked at nights in the open air with impunity; not that we travelled entirely free from a wet jacket, for occasionally we encountered smart showers; but these served only to refresh the arid face of nature in that region, and make the landscape more brilliant than before, while our clothes would become wet and dry alternately without producing any of those serious results on the constitution which occur under similar circumstances in the mother country. Scarcely a day passed but we had the clear blue sky visible to soften the glare of the strong sunlight; notwithstanding the heat of the weather, we felt a buoyancy come over our spirits which was quite invigorating; and instead of feeling that lassitude which deadens the appetite in hot climates, we ate our homely meals with a zest which the epicure might well have envied.

It was at such times that the idea would recur to us, what a glorious climate this is for the restoration of broken-

down constitutions, where the invalid from a tropical region, or the dying patient from the bleak north, will find a healing balm in the salubrious atmosphere of this favoured country. Here the heavens are bright—brighter than the far-famed skies of Italy; the seasons are genial—more genial than those of the health-inspiring Madeiras; the atmosphere is transcendently pure, there is no death-dealing malaria to poison its sweet breath, whilst by its life-giving influence it checks the progress of that fell destroyer consumption; and while it furnishes the wealthy with those productions which make life all that is to be desired, it yields that abundance of food which all communities are toiling for. Here the luxurious man can indulge his appetite in the most luscious viands and fruits, in a land where the grape, the pine-apple, and banana grow in the open air; and the labourer can make his table groan under the giant vegetables which accompany his cheap beef and mutton. This is essentially the poor man's country, independently of the treasures his labour can extract from the rich earth; for besides the abundance of necessaries and comforts it can furnish for the inner man, its genial climate enables him to dispense with expensive clothing for the outer man. The winters are so mild that you rarely feel the necessity of wearing a topcoat, and for eight months in the year the labouring population seldom wear coats at all. It will readily be imagined, therefore, that you have more frequently to adopt means to cool yourself here than otherwise; although the extreme heat produces no baneful effects upon the temperate constitution, still it creates many animals and insects in the country, which are not only annoying but often dangerous to man.

The day we travelled from Jugion to Yass town was very sultry, and we found the flies most troublesome. We overtook two men journeying the same way as ourselves, one on horseback, the other on foot; they were residents in the district, and spoke well of the country generally, expressing a hope that the government would extend the system of selling land in small lots, as was announced in the *Gazette* to have been begun in other districts; from such a system they expected much good would accrue to the community, as it would retain the population on the

soil, and prevent them rushing away to the gold-fields. While chatting away in this manner, the man on foot suddenly cried out, "A snake! a snake!" Our horses bounded and dashed forward, instinctively knowing the danger. On looking down upon the road, we saw the reptile close under our horses' feet; we soon passed over it, and when beyond danger turned round and pulled up. The man on foot without much difficulty killed the reptile, when it proved to be a brown snake upwards of five feet long; this is a venomous species, and a bite from it would have been fatal to either man or horse. It was the first snake we had seen on our journey; and they are not often met with by the colonists, who carry on a war of extermination against them.

We did not travel along the main road from the inn at Jugion towards Yass, which is considered to be forty miles, for we struck off the road to the left, along a by-road up the valley of the Jugion, to the hospitable residence of Mr. Manning of Cumbamurro, situated in the district of Binalong or Lachlan, on the Jugion and Cunningham creeks, twenty-one miles from the main road, and thirty miles from Yass. We did not find the country through which we traversed either so picturesque or so valuable as that bordering on the Murrumbidgee; the ranges of hills appeared often poor and gravelly, with rocks of the quartz formation cropping out; yet though thinly grassed, these hills afford sweet pasture for sheep, and the flocks we passed on our way looked well. There was plenty of water in the Jugion, but the branch creeks were dry; and as we came from time to time to a shepherd's hut, we found them situated near water-holes.

Cumbamurro is a beautiful spot in the midst of these hills. The residence is built in the cottage style, sufficiently large for even town comforts, well furnished and complete in every respect for the home of a gentleman and his family. It overlooks a broad valley, much of which is under cultivation and enclosed, having in front of it a very tastefully-arranged garden, with many choice exotics and fruit-trees. In the distance and surrounding the estate on every side are moderately high hills covered with grass and well timbered; the road to Yass is seen

passing over them. At the back of the house are such buildings as are requisite for conducting the operations of an extensive squatting-station, surrounded with cattle-yards and sheep-pens. Here you meet with those refinements that give value to life, and which alone can be found where an amiable and cultivated woman presides; without her man would be but a solitary and rude being in those remote localities, coming in contact as he does with the rough-and-ready men of the bush; with her all is cheerfulness, and he toils on hopeful of the future.

From Cumbamurro we proceeded by Binalong, the head-quarters of the commissioner of crown-lands for the district, to Broughtonsworth, the residence of Mr. Broughton, distant about twenty miles. The country we passed through was good pastoral land, and we were informed that the grass possessed good fattening properties for cattle. This estate is situated upon the left bank of the Boorowa River, a stream of considerable breadth; and at this place deep enough, and constantly flowing, so that it forms a boundary between the properties on each side of it, across which cattle and sheep cannot stray. On referring to the map, it will be seen to fall into the Lachlan River, after pursuing a tortuous course of about sixty miles. It is full of fine fish; an advantage which the tributaries of the Lachlan have over the more southern streams, which have their sources in the western range of mountains. This river separates the squatting district of Arden, which includes part of the Lachlan and Lower Darling, from the county of King, which is represented in the Legislative Council by Mr. W. Macarthur.

Broughtonsworth is a very retired spot even among those solitudes, and is out of the way of general travellers, making it rather a lonely residence; but it has many advantages in the goodness of the country and the excellence of its climate. The plains in its vicinity, which take their name from the river, known as the Boorowa plains, might be more appropriately called downs; they are not so extensive as the neighbouring plains of Yass, and have more trees scattered over them. They are likewise considerably elevated above the surrounding country, which you are aware of in coming from the Murrumbidgee River, there

being a constant ascent all the way. The view which opens up before you on this elevated land is very fine. You see the extent of the country to advantage, which appears open and good, although we were informed that it was not always well supplied with water; however, as the population increases, that is a disadvantage against which the skill and enterprise of the community will, it is to be hoped, contend successfully.

Mr. Broughton is a very old settler, one who has fairly taken root in the country, and reared up a family of Anglo-Australians about him; and that which would be very solitary to new-comers of the tender sex, is to his lady and daughters quite natural; they enter fully into all that is going forward on the station, and have made it a comfortable home. He and his kind lady gave us a very hearty welcome, which we have much pleasure in recording. The improvements upon this property are of a superior description to what you generally find upon a mere squatting-station, the place being his own freehold. His first dwelling was a small wooden cottage, from which he had but lately removed into a capital brick-built house. Around there is a great deal of fencing, with out-offices and all that is requisite for his establishment. His wheat crop was the finest we had seen, and promised to yield an abundant return. In these remote districts there is seldom more corn grown than is necessary for each establishment; but as the mineral treasures of the colony develop themselves, there will be a good market within a reasonable distance of such fertile localities, where large bodies of non-producers of food will congregate with the means from their gold-digging operations to pay handsomely for their flour. The capabilities of this particular region as a corn-growing country are very great, and a market alone is necessary to prove its fertility.

From Broughtonsworth to Yass is about thirty-five miles. On the road you pass several farms, the paths leading to them striking off in all directions, so that you are in great danger of missing your way among them. The whole line of country through which you travel is above the average description of Australian pastoral land, and in many places exceedingly picturesque. There is a large population in the district,

and many establishments similar to what we described at Broughtonsworth. Within about six miles of Yass you leave the by-paths to these stations, and come into the main southern road from Sydney to Melbourne. After an hour's ride along this well-beaten track you enter the town of Yass, prettily situated upon the north bank of a river of the same name, giving its name also to the surrounding plains, which are of great extent, and resembling much the best portions of the South Downs in Sussex. The town has, or rather, we should say, had a very considerable population. As, however, there is a likelihood of the precious metal being found in its vicinity, from particles having been picked up near the river, those who have left for gold will probably return, should this division of the territory prove to be as rich as its neighbours. Men are very much the creatures of habit in this respect, even amongst the erratic population of Australia; and this is really a very pretty place to reside in, exceedingly healthy, and the country in every direction beautiful. Yass then would become the centre to which the miners would resort for their supplies; and the rich agricultural lands in its vicinity would produce all the grain required for the support of a large population. Already Yass presents the appearance of a very well-built country town, possessing some substantial edifices of stone, with the usual complement of inns and stores, besides a court-house. Before you cross the river, on the south side there is a flour-mill, having a good command of water. Altogether, we were very much pleased with the position and appearance of this town, and feel assured that, possessing so many advantages as it does, there is every probability of its progressing rapidly after the re-action takes place upon the altered condition of the colony.

Our resting-place in this delightful locality was at the hospitable residence of Mr. Henry O'Brien of "Deuro," the native name of his estate, situated on the rising ground above the river, about two miles from Yass, commanding a splendid view in every direction. All about this establishment is in the best of order, as regards garden, grounds, and house,—the latter may be fairly called a mansion; and the whole is such, that any gentleman of fortune in Eng-

land would be well pleased to occupy. The estate is of considerable extent, and there is a great portion of the land enclosed and under cultivation. The approach to the house from the main road is through some cleared land for half a mile, the intermediate space being an enclosure from the beautiful plains of Yass. Many of our readers may perhaps be surprised to hear that in the interior of New South Wales establishments such as this should have arisen; but if they will reflect that a great many of those who have been the pioneer-settlers in the Australian wilderness were not only men of enterprise, but of education and taste, they will cease to wonder; men who had determined, with such means as they possessed, to work out their fortunes in a distant land, away from the cares which press often heavily upon the spirits of so many in a country circumstanced as England is, and as every old and populous state must be, more or less. To these men may be ascribed the high tone of intelligence which guides the affairs of these infant colonies. To their means and energies do we attribute the success of the educational schemes and other useful works of a like nature which have been implanted in the colony, as well as the advance in its material prosperity. And we are not stating more than the truth when we publish the fact, that the maintenance as well as the establishment of successful free colonisation on the Australian shores, is the work of their high intelligence, unceasing industry, and indomitable perseverance. Mr. O'Brien is one of those men; and in Australia there are hundreds, nay thousands, like him in spirit, if not in fortune.

As in England there prevails an annual practice amongst country people of visiting town, and the towns-people visiting the country at certain seasons, so in Australia a similar custom is growing up, particularly among the old colonists of New South Wales. The season in Sydney is looked forward to by the families of the settlers with the same anxiety that a London season is to "our country cousins," and the Sydney residents are not disinclined to pay a visit to their friends in the interior. This is as it should be; the intercourse occasioned thereby is favourable in every way, and it is thus that the homely institutions of

the mother country take deep root in the affections of her children in whatever spot of the earth their lot may be cast. And as to dulness in what is called a "bush life," none experience it excepting those who would be dull wherever they happened to be.

Within a mile of Mr. O'Brien's is the residence of Mr. Hume, a gentleman known to the world from his enterprise in exploring this colony in its early history, beyond the western mountains, and who discovered the upper branch of the Murray, or as it is sometimes called after him, Hume River. His residence, although very beautiful, is not equal to Mr. O'Brien's. On the opposite side of the river is a charming view of a windmill, which gives a novel feature to the landscape in this locality.

Proceeding from Deuro in a southerly direction you come again to the Murrumbidgee River, nearer its source than when we left it before making the Yass River. On its banks, and not far from Cavan, the residence of Mr. Potter, are some very wonderful limestone caves. Mr. O'Brien very obligingly proposed a trip to them, but time could not be spared by us for that; we cannot, however, resist giving a description of these caves, and the banks of the Murrumbidgee near them, upon which we can rely.

The view of the surrounding country is very picturesque, and the Murrumbidgee is here a running stream with a good deal of water in it, flowing circuitously through a very broken country. There are a few alluvial flats to be seen; but the banks are chiefly hilly, and bounded by rather high ranges, thinly timbered and covered with grass, so that the whole view of the river meandering over its stony bed is very beautiful. It is rather too extensive to be considered a snugly sheltered valley, and yet it is nothing more than a valley of broken ranges of limestone hills. Arriving at the caves, you enter by a narrow fissure, a little way up the side of a hill, rising out of a deep valley, which is so covered by loose rocks that no one would suppose there was any opening. Passing into the cave for some distance, its floor slopes inwards, and a few dozen yards bring you to a spacious chamber, with lofty walls and roof of uneven surface, presenting some most fantastic shapes and appearances. But there are here very few sta-

lactites; it seems composed mostly of the limestone rock encrusted by calcareous deposits. Scrambling for some considerable distance along a rugged and difficult path, sometimes through very small apertures, on hands and knees, at other times surmounting high rocks; sometimes through caves opening out like the first into spacious apartments, at other times through narrow and low passages,—you come to a most beautiful specimen of calcareous spar, called Ebden's-altar, from its resemblance to that sacred table; it is a mass of crystallised though opaque stalactite like a mound, with a thin covering of the same material, in colour and appearance resembling alabaster, hanging over it; altogether it is an extraordinary and beautiful object. These caves are so numerous that probably not one-half of them have been explored. They are certainly worth visiting, where the traveller has time to spare.

As our narrative purports to give the reader a faithful description of these now interesting regions, we shall be excused if our expressions strike the ear as monotonous; for the repetition of such phrases as "open forest-land," "well grassed," "scrubby," and such like, are truly descriptive of the scenery; and their very repetition may convey to the reader some idea of that monotony which characterises the aspect of the country generally.

From the hospitable mansion of Mr. O'Brien we struck again into the Sydney road. For the first eight miles or thereabouts you travel through the most beautiful country in every respect; open forest-land, with large spaces free from trees, well grassed and park-like. You then ascend and pass over a range of rather high hills, which continue until you reach the "Gap," sixteen miles from Yass. At this stage of the road there is an inn having much better accommodation than you would expect; there is some cultivation about it likewise, and it is well situated with regard to water. The road over these hills does credit to those who have the keeping it in repair, considering that they are rugged and scrubby generally, and covered with heavy timber. There is much quartz rock here and there to be seen as you pass along, and quartz veins shew themselves frequently on the surface. There are said to be other indications about of the presence of gold and the inferior

metals. From the summit of them you catch a glimpse of extensive plains and ranges of mountains in the direction in which you are travelling, and stretching away to the south and west. That open country is the commencement of the tract which ends in Yass plains, and the latter fine country is that through which we have journeyed.

In eleven miles you come to Gungun Creek, on the banks of which there is a considerable sprinkling of huts and small cultivation paddocks. Judging from the appearance of the growing crops which we saw when we passed through, we should say that the soil of this high country is very good. Besides these evidences of an agricultural population on the creek, we passed on either side of the road some small settlers, who had commenced their labours, and from the abundance about their huts, or homesteads, with the fair order in which their cattle were in, we concluded that they had been doing pretty well during the past season. There cannot be said to be much grass, yet we saw several flocks of sheep, and from time to time cattle, which we presumed would require more than the ordinary extent of land allowed for their support, which is generally calculated at three acres to a sheep.

From Gungun to Winderadeen you leave the main road and travel in a southerly direction towards Lake George, where the latter-named place is situated, being the residence of Mr. Murray, a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales. The place where you turn off the great south road is about thirty miles from Goulburn, at a spot where there are some water-holes, which in rainy weather soon fill, and then overflow, running across the road. From this point to Lake George is about twelve miles, over ridges partly very poor and rugged and partly well grassed. On the former are small iron-bark and spotted gum trees, on the latter are larger trees of the description common to good soil in this high region. At one of Mr. Murray's stations on the Fish River which we crossed, there is some excellent arable land, shewing signs of cultivation, and general improvement in the way of fencing, with huts conveniently situated near water, of which there was abundance. Those high ranges form the western boundary of the beautiful, well-wooded, and rich mountain valley into

which we shortly afterwards entered. The descent is rather steep, and the view obstructed to the east and west by high mountain-chains. Up and down the valley, however, running north and south, the scenery is very fine and picturesque. In about a mile and a half from the foot of the range, after passing through some very fine paddocks well enclosed, you at length come to a complete country gentleman's residence, consisting of a large stone-built house, with stables, out-houses, garden, ornamented grounds, &c. This is Winderadeen, the beautiful country residence of Mr. Murray, adjoining the township of "Collector," and about three miles from the north end of Lake George. Every thing about this place has the air of comfort, and exhibits substantial means on the part of the proprietor; the fences and such out-offices as are deemed necessary for the present are all good, and kept in excellent order. The land around the residence and towards the lake belongs to Mr. Murray. The valley in which it is situated is of very considerable and varying width; in some places nearly three miles, in others much less; the soil is good, and it is unusually well watered by a chain of ponds running through the middle, alternating with small alluvial flats either clear of trees, or very thinly studded with gum and apple trees. Cattle thrive better than sheep upon the strong grasses which grow in this valley; though there is a considerable portion of the country fit for sheep at a certain time of the year, which is stated to be from the first of September to the first of May, when the grasses will nourish them in such parts where the ground is sound and free from standing water. Those parts unfit for sheep have rushes growing upon them, and sometimes even cattle cannot get at such land. Ascending the steep banks of this valley, you come into the Breadalbane plains country to the eastward; and pursuing your way out of it, you come where the so-called lake is, which we passed over in our journey, and found quite dry and covered with grass; in fact, there are always flocks of sheep and herds of cattle depasturing thereon, and they seem to be particularly fond of the grass it produces which is very nutritious, and contains some saline matter, which makes it palatable.

In this part of the country snow falls during the

winter, as it does likewise in all the mountain-ranges and table-land throughout New South Wales, when they are at an elevation of 1500 or 2000 feet above the level of the sea; and besides the severe frosts which occur from May to September, there are summer frosts, which occasionally do damage to the pasture and crops. In consequence of the comparatively cool temperature of this region to the climate on the eastern side of the cordillera, it has the advantage of growing all descriptions of European fruits; while the vine produces as excellent grapes as the land in the warm valleys below.

Some distance from Winderadeen is the almost abandoned residence of the original proprietor of this property, the father of the present possessor. Here are the buildings and stockyard usually to be found throughout this colony, when there were large establishments carried on under the assignment system. How very much changed are all such places now! You seldom see any thing doing that indicates activity about them; where there were from twenty to thirty men at work, there are not more than two or three seen in these times. The result is, that there is the reverse of that which indicates progress—ruined buildings, fences out of order, &c. The strength of the present proprietor seems, in this instance, to concentrate itself about the upper part of the estate around his new abode.

Mr. Murray in the night received an express from his other residence at Yarra Lumla, about thirty-six miles distant, on the Limestone plains, to visit his family, who were residing there, without delay; and as we were desirous of seeing that part of the country, we accepted the hospitable invitation of that gentleman to follow him thither in his carriage. The road, for the first twelve miles after leaving the valley, skirts the western side of the lake, when you keep along the road to the right, through what is called the "Gap," and ascend the range by which the lake is bounded to the west. We had heard so much of Lake George, and seen its extent on the map —to which we refer the reader—that we had made up our minds to see at length a fine sheet of water in Australia. We were not a little surprised, therefore, and somewhat

disappointed, to find that Lake George was in reality nothing more than an extensive plain some twenty miles long by an average of about six miles wide. As far as the eye can reach you see nothing but a level plain; not a rise, not a tree, nor an object of any height to interrupt the view, with the exception of cattle here and there in small herds, or scattered over its surface, with a flock of sheep dotting the plain at intervals, and if you are keen of sight you may possibly make out a shepherd. The whole of this space, however, has been known to be covered with water, and the trees on the outskirts or margin of the lake to have been killed by submersion. We should imagine that no great depth of water covered this flat land during that time, except perhaps in some parts where there is always water, and which you can see upon ascending the high lands some miles towards its eastern side, when it appears like the broad reach of a river passing through a vast plain.

This immense basin in the lap of these mountains has no outlet when it does become filled with water; it is surrounded on all sides by an amphitheatre of hills and lofty mountain-ranges, some of which rise almost perpendicularly from the bed of the lake, others sloping gradually to a considerable height. These latter are covered with excellent soil, thinly timbered, and are considered capital grazing land. Between them are many mountain valleys, with water-courses which drain the large tract of country behind; and this valley receives the water, it being the lowest level in their vicinity; and no doubt when an unusually rainy season occurs, it will again be filled with water and assume the aspect of a lake. Such a circumstance might be a serious inconvenience, and perhaps entail great loss to those who feed their flocks and herds thereon; yet it is evident that it forms a natural reservoir in the hills, which supplies water to localities which are oftentimes dry.

The range of mountains which bounds this lake and valley divides the eastern and western waters, the one shed of waters flowing into the Pacific Ocean on the east coast, the other being the sources which feed the Murrumbidgee, and flow to the westward; thus forming a portion of the

great Australian cordillera, which begins at Wilson Promontory at the extreme south angle of the country, and extends to Cape York at its northern extremity,—a distance little less than 1700 miles. These ranges are generally highest on the western flank; and though there is pretty good pastoral and agricultural land close to the lake, yet the back ranges near the summit are scrubby and poor. The country to the north-east and east side of the lake and valley is more grassy and very much less timbered; and in the direction of Goulburn there appears that fine open forest-land we have already described. Our road lay here along a tolerably smooth track, which did not incommode the progress of the carriage so much as we should have found upon most of the country roads in England.

Before we arrived at the "Gap" we saw a shepherd at the entrance of a gully, or as it was called "stony-creek," where an out-station was situated. He was standing near his hut watching his sheep far away on the plain below, which we did not see until they were pointed out to us; they could not be distinguished but by a practised eye, they were such small specs. High wages had not yet reached this locality; for this man had engaged only a short time before for six months at the rate of 20*l.* a-year. In consequence, however, of a shepherd in the same master's employ having just left, another flock had been added to his charge, and his wages were raised accordingly. Still this was not a sufficient inducement to keep him beyond the time he had engaged for, as he was determined to try his luck at the diggings. In our conversation with this shepherd we were struck by his manner and speech, which was above that of the mere labourer; and his little history, which he briefly told us, proved that we were not wrong. He said he was an artist, and had received a good education from his father, who was a man of good repute at Merton in Surrey. That a year or two before, he was tempted, by the favourable reports of Port Philip, to try his fortune there in prosecuting his profession. When he arrived he found that his talent as an artist was of no value to him, and his small means became exhausted, when the reality of his position soon became clear. He

did not blame any one but himself for the step he had taken, only that he had been mistaken as to the class of men best adapted for the exigencies of a colonial life; he had learnt a lesson, and he trusted he should profit by it. That upon the discovery of gold at Bathurst he had started from Port Philip to walk overland, and try his fortune as a gold-digger; having reached thus far, his means had failed him, and he was compelled to defer his intention until he could realise the wherewithal to make another start by acting in the capacity of a shepherd, as he was then employed. The experiences of this young man are by no means singular throughout these colonies; and there have been many hundreds with better prospects at starting compelled through necessity to labour at the ordinary occupations of the colony; and many have by the sweat of their brow worked out their independence, when probably they would have remained poor educated men to the end of the chapter. The energy and spirit shewn by this poor fellow makes us indulge in the hope and the wish that he may be one of the fortunate ones in the end. We asked him to sketch his "gunya" and the rocky creek of the gully in the background, when he informed us he had neither pencil nor paper; on a leaf of our Journal he made the sketch, and well executed it is. Before leaving that part of the country we made a request that his wish to have some paper and pencils might be gratified.

We had still upwards of twenty-four miles of our journey to accomplish, and the day was far spent, so we urged the driver to push on as much as possible before night set in. Limestone plains, towards which we were proceeding, will be seen on the map to lie south-west of Lake George. Our road lay over some rough forest-country, with open glades at intervals, as at Mr. Guise's farm at Bywong, and "Jerry Biggery's flat," where there are small water-courses, with the land upon their banks under cultivation. As we approached within a few miles of our destination, we crossed the Canbury plain, some six or eight miles long by a mile and a half wide. On the road we passed many small dwellings, and we guessed that there must be a considerable population about, although we met but few people. We were told that many of the

men had gone on to the Gunderoo ranges near Bywong and towards Yass, where there were people at work for gold. In and near Gunderoo Creek, where we crossed, there were the usual indications of the precious metal. The only men we saw about were shepherds and stock-keepers, who were mostly owners of the cattle and sheep they were tending; the men having very generally abandoned their old labour for a more profitable occupation.

As the sun was setting, he cast his beams over a picturesque and extensive country before us. In front was the "Black mountain," and to the left, sloping hills less elevated, which were covered with dark forests, that shewed the ruby tints of an Australian sunset, in fine contrast with their gloomy shades. To the right were the Canbury plains, quite free from trees, bounded on the south by the Cooleman or Cullatine mountains, where Mr. Murray has another station, and in the far distance appeared the Brindha Bella mountains. At the entrance to the plain on the left between these high lands is the township or village of Canbury, with its little church, sufficiently large to accommodate the scattered population hereabouts. Night had closed in upon us, and we were disappointed by being deprived of a nearer view of the country which suddenly opens upon emerging from the forest as you descend a ridge which bounds Canbury plain on that side. Fortunately the coachman knew the country well, or we might have missed the proper road in the darkness. As it was, he had great difficulty in finding his way through by-paths, with slip panels in their fences, belonging to paddocks on the grounds of Mr. Jeffreys and Mr. Macpherson under the Black mountain. We also had some difficulty in crossing the River Queanbeyan or Molonglo River, one of the tributary streams of the Murrumbidgee, which, though high, was fortunately at this time not dangerous to cross. At length, after overcoming all these difficulties in the darkness of the night, we reached our destination at Yarra Lumla in safety by eleven o'clock.

Crossing these rivers when they are swollen is frequently attended with danger. The little community in and around Canbury, not very long before we visited that place, had a gloom cast over it by the untimely death of the Rev.

George Gregory, minister of the little church of St. John's, just mentioned, who was drowned while attempting to swim across this river. The reverend gentleman, besides officiating two Sundays in each month at Canbury, devoted one Sunday to the pastoral charge at Gunderoo—about twenty miles from his parsonage; and one Sunday to a congregation of the squatters scattered over the land on the other side of the Murrumbidgee, who but for his visits would have been deprived of the ordinances of the Church. During his absence from home in the pursuit of his duties, the rivers in this quarter had risen considerably above their usual height. Having crossed some smaller streams on his return, he resolved upon attempting the Queanbeyan, especially as he considered himself a good swimmer. After calling at the residence of Mr. Mowle, where he dined, he expressed to that gentleman his determination to cross over to the parsonage, which is on the opposite bank of the river to where he was. The current was so strong that Mr. Mowle and another gentleman urged him strongly not to make the attempt. Mr. Gregory, however, persisted, remarking, that he had been five days from home, and must return to his books. The unfortunate gentleman seemed so confident in his ability to swim across, that his friends relinquished their opposition, and he, after taking off his coat and boots, sprang into the river with a smile. The force of the current hurried him down the stream; but at first he did not seem alarmed, and called out to Mr. Mowle, "All's right." Almost immediately afterwards he suddenly sank, and never appeared above the water, until his body was found lower down the stream. As the water at the time was extremely cold, it is conjectured that he was seized with cramp, and his energies became paralysed. Mr. Gregory had resided in that locality about sixteen months, and was very popular. He appears to have been a most exemplary man; his kindness of heart and amiable temper, his zeal in discharge of his sacred duties, especially in visiting his parishioners, and his eloquence in the pulpit, had endeared him to all classes; and his death is regarded as an almost irreparable loss.

We have been induced to give this account of the fate of Mr. Gregory, as it shews the dangers which often beset

clergymen in the performance of their duties in the interior of Australia. Indeed the labour of clergymen of all denominations is very great in that thinly-peopled country, and their attention to their sacred duties in most instances is beyond all praise; and it is the hope of every good colonist that sectarian differences will not be indulged in amongst them, to the damage of religion, and to the destruction or injury of that feeling of equanimity which prevails. Some men, who call themselves ministers of the gospel, and take advantage of their position to rouse the people into rebellion, by entering into fierce political contests with the government and the colonists, appear to us to have mistaken their duty and their office, which is that of preachers of good-will and charity towards all men.

The house at Yarra Lumla is a large and commodious residence, with suitable offices and grounds for the abode of a country gentleman. It is well situated above the river just named, and commands a fine view of the undulating country in the vicinity of Limestone plains, bordered by distant hills clothed with dense foliage. Down the valley, which runs in a northerly direction, you come to the Murrumbidgee again in its tortuous windings, some eight miles distant as the crow flies, over which country you have an extensive view, with mountains in the distance, presenting a broken outline on the horizon, the space between being a level wooded tract of land. At the back of the house you see the Black mountain rising on the opposite side of the river, like a giant amongst the smaller hills which surround the plains. Up the valley there is a good deal of cultivation, many families having small holdings from Mr. Murray, the benefit of which he now feels in the scarcity of labour which has come over the colony. The village of Canbury, with its pretty little church, is about two miles distant. There is here not only much that is naturally grand, but man has done his part to assist nature's beauty, by adding his labours to give life to her solitudes.

From Yarra Lumla we paid a visit to a brother of our host's, Dr. Murray, who resides upon his estate called Duntroon, about eight miles distant, the road passing through Limestone plains. On the south side, about two

miles from the road, is the residence of Mr. George Campbell, not far from Mount Ainslie, which rises boldly from the plain. This place is called Byalegy, a native name which is spelt on the maps Pialago. The rising ground at the back is thinly timbered, and presents some splendid sheep-walks thickly covered with grass; and the soil in many parts is stated to be of the richest description. In due time we arrived at Dr. Murray's residence called Woden, a very excellent house, built of stone and brick, and unusually situated upon a hill some distance from water. Many persons might take exception to the judgment displayed by the worthy doctor in placing his house in such a position, yet on such a point we do not think that his taste should be attacked. Some people, however, like to criticise, and the great mass generally decide because somebody has said they know not what. Dr. Murray has, however, pleased himself; and in a splendid situation, in our opinion, has he placed his residence. The view towards the Murrumbidgee mountains in front of the house is very extensive, and presents a prospect seldom surpassed in these regions for wild and grand scenery. Mount Tennant, distinguishable from the others in the range, is called after a bush-ranger of that name, who, in days when such things happened, took up his abode in the deep recesses of these mountains. Below the house is a rich and very considerable valley, well watered, with enclosed ground and plenty of stock feeding about. Behind the house rises a high hill, which appears the extreme verge of a spur from the mountain-chain in the distance. Every thing about the premises is well arranged, from the garden in front, well stocked with fruit-trees, to the stabling and out-offices behind. Altogether the position of this residence, and the surrounding scenery, is very beautiful, fine, and pleasing, and Dr. Murray can well afford the smiles of his friends.

The post-town of Queanbeyan is distant from this place about four miles, and 170 from Sydney, and is the centre of a district bearing the same name, having about 2000 inhabitants. On the whole, we formed a very favourable opinion of this district, and considered it to be well situated for a large agricultural population; though we

were told that there are in summer occasionally hot winds, and snow in winter, with severe frosts often, which are against the crops; otherwise the climate is pleasant and favourable to health, and all that man could desire. All around in the severest droughts water has never been known to fail. In the gardens are to be found all European fruits and vegetables, and the vine produces abundantly. The pastoral lands are very excellent; and throughout New South Wales we have not seen cattle, sheep, and horses in better condition than hereabouts. And we are certain that this upland district is peculiarly capable of supporting a large population. At Janefield, the property of the late Dr. Wilson, we were struck particularly with the rich appearance of the land; the little cultivation upon it promised to yield an abundant crop. This district is said to be exposed from its high altitude to heavy storms; we should say, however, from the appearance of the trees, which looked well and unscathed when we passed through, that these storms are not common. The height of the land generally may be considered at upwards of 2000 feet above the level of the sea, several of the mountains being above 3500 feet. There has not been any gold found in this quarter as yet; but we are strongly impressed with the idea that it will prove as rich in mineral wealth as the neighbouring counties nearer the sea-coast, for there is a great similarity about the formation here to that seen in the vicinity of the Braidwood and Araluen gold-fields, to which we will direct the reader's attention shortly. During our journey through this interesting district we frequently conversed with the smaller class of settlers upon the leasing and purchasing of land, and we every where found a great desire among the people to become possessed of land upon which they could establish themselves permanently. We are confident that until a system is established of disposing of the waste lands in Australia in small lots, so as to suit the working population of the country, there will always be an unsettled feeling amongst the inhabitants. Once let the industrious family-man have a farm and a house he can call his own, and all the attractions of the gold-fields will not induce him to wander about, as many are now doing, like Arabs and gipsies, from one spot to another. We are

happy to state that there appears every disposition on the part of the local government to favour this laudable wish.

On the following day we took leave of our hospitable entertainer and returned to Winderadeen. The day was unusually sultry and wet, and what with the heat, rain, and flies, we were glad to get to the end of our journey. On the way we observed that the lands on the eastern side of Lake George were not so hilly as the western side, and in every respect we found it a better country. We noticed also several homesteads of settlers with many hundreds of cattle and horses depasturing, and occasionally a flock of sheep. At the southern end of the lake is Currandoula, the joint estate of Sir Charles Nicholson, the speaker of the Legislative Council, and Mr. Lithgow, the auditor-general. This property is near to Bungendore, a village possessing the advantages of a post, as indeed almost every place accessible throughout New South Wales has, so that there is not that isolation from the world in these solitudes which many people suppose, and the idea of which frightens and alarms those who would otherwise make the bush their home. In the evening we arrived safe at Winderadeen completely worn out, and we were glad to retire to rest early.

CHAPTER XIII.

BRAIDWOOD GOLD-FIELDS.

Mr. Hargreaves entitled to all the merit of the gold-discovery—Road from Winderadeen to Braidwood — Town of Braidwood — Farringdon, the estate of Sir Charles Nicholson — Nithsdale, and its proprietor Mr. Wallace—Dr. Wallace—Mr. Badgery's estate—Major's Creek diggings—Gold mines on private property—Bell's Creek and Araluen Vale—Springfield, Mr. Faithful's estate—Completeness of the establishment—Town of Goulburn—Deserted by its male population—Browne's return from the diggings.

When the discovery of gold in Australia was publicly announced by Mr. Hargreaves—with whose name we shall always couple the merit of demonstrating this great fact to the world, notwithstanding the claims of scientific men for the honour, for we consider him the practical man who pointed out the way to the gold-fields,—when this gentleman first published the names of the various localities where he had been successful in finding gold, many intelligent settlers in other parts of the colony ascertained the nature and description of the rocks occurring in the vicinity of the deposits, and immediately set to work in their own localities to search for the hidden treasure, instead of flocking with the multitude to the Bathurst mountains, concluding wisely that these comprised only a small section of the great mountain-chain where it existed. Like the industrious tenants of an Australian ant-hill suddenly roused, the whole community of bushmen became alive amongst the rocks and valleys of the colony. Stock-whips and shepherds' crooks were thrown aside for pickaxes and shovels, with which adventurous men might be seen exploring the gold region, and with what success is now well known to the world. Amongst other localities which have not only equalled but surpassed in richness the original

gold-field at Summer-hill Creek, those of Braidwood and Araluen are not the least productive; and as we were at this stage of our journey within a short distance of them, we resolved upon paying them a visit.

The distance from Mr. Murray's residence at Winderadeen to the town of Braidwood is about thirty-six miles. For two-thirds of the way the country may be described as hilly, with rocks jutting out occasionally, intersected by veins of mineral quartz and iron-stone; and here and there you meet with granite boulders. These hills are thinly timbered by gum and iron-bark trees, with here and there belts of dense brushwood, alternating with some fair land for sheep-walks; and half-way on the road, at Mr. Hyland's, of the "Long swamp," a considerable extent of good land free from trees, well-grassed, and finely-watered. The homestead at this station is that of a substantial farmer. Further on you come to Arnprior, the estate of Mr. Ryrie in the county of Murray, on the Shoalhaven River, about 152 miles from Sydney. Here there is a considerable quantity of land enclosed, but the property is not highly esteemed; gold has been found upon it, however; and we sincerely hope that it will ultimately be of great value to its possessors. From this spot the remaining twelve miles of the road is through a good open forest country, which must soon become valuable land, as there seems now to be no doubt but that the country within the vicinity of Braidwood is exceedingly rich in mineral wealth, and that therefore the population which continues flocking to it from remote districts will create a large town in time; and this rich country in arable land and pasture, as well as in the precious metals, must become densely peopled.

As the discovery of gold draws the population away from districts and towns where it is not found, to those localities where it abounds in large quantities, towns will spring up in favourable situations among those mountain districts, which, unless such a discovery had been made, would have taken years, perhaps generations, to attract a numerous population to their out-of-the-way situations. Braidwood is one of those spots, situated among the mountain-ranges of the great cordillera some 2000 feet above the

level of the sea, to which multitudes of people from the low countries have resorted in pursuit of the one great object—gold! It is finely situated on Mankitee Creek, under the mountain Jillamatong, within the county of St. Vincent, a hundred and sixty-four miles from Sydney. Before the gold-discovery it contained about fifty houses, and three hundred inhabitants; now we should say in its vicinity there may be found as many thousands. It is only twelve miles from the gold-diggings at Major's Creek, and something more from those of Bell's Creek and the Araluen gold-fields. This small village, therefore, was becoming a place of considerable importance when we passed through it; all was activity; every one was looking forward with hope; and property in the neighbourhood was rising in value. Every day brought intelligence of fresh discoveries, all tending to prove that the whole district was exceedingly rich in gold, and it was said in other minerals also. So, what with the beauty and fertility of the surrounding country, and the rich mineral treasures to be found, there seems to be little doubt but that the prosperity of this quarter will be permanent.

Before visiting any portion of the gold-fields, we proceeded through Braidwood to Mr. Wallace's of Nithsdale, situated on the right bank of the Shoalhaven River, sixteen miles distant. This river divides the counties of Murray, Argyle, and Camden from St. Vincent, taking its rise in the district of Maneroo, from whence it flows in a northerly direction parallel with the coast, until it passes through one of the Shoalhaven gullies, where it flows into the sea at Coolangatta, about a hundred miles from Sydney. The road we were directed to take was little better than a rough bush-track, of which there were many intersecting and branching from each other at the outskirts of the town, rendering it difficult for a stranger to follow the right path; and so it happened; we had not proceeded far when we found that we had taken the wrong one. As it turned out, we were not at all disappointed at our mistake; for we had thereby an opportunity of passing through Farringdon, a fine property on the left bank of the river, belonging to Sir Charles Nicholson, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, situated at the foot of Mount

Ebrington,—a magnificent object in the landscape seen from the spot where you ford the river. This is a large, and will become an exceedingly valuable estate, not only from the abundance and richness of the alluvial land it possesses for agricultural purposes, but from the extent of its grazing-land for cattle; and it would appear, from what we heard, that the mineral wealth of the country extended to the mountain-ranges near it. There are considerable improvements already going on within its boundaries, and much greater are in progress. In a happily-chosen spot at the entrance of a valley or gully leading into the high-lands is a grassy knoll commanding an extensive view of the valley and the broad flats on the banks of the river; upon this knoll a residence is being built, and, when finished, this spot, in the course of time, will become one among the choice places in New South Wales that will attract the stranger.

From Sir Charles Nicholson's to Mr Wallace's, at Nithsdale, on the opposite or east bank of the Shoalhaven River, is about five miles, the road passing through rich grassy land until you again ford the river, where it is a clear running stream, and then in a couple of miles more you arrive at Nithsdale. Mr. Wallace was in his shearing-shed, superintending his shearers, when we arrived; the operations of sheep-shearing, washing, and wool-sorting requiring the attendance of the proprietor, if he expects to have them well done. Nithsdale, though not so picturesque a place as Farringdon, is well situated; and it has also the advantage of commanding a view of Mount Ebrington and a range of mountains, at the back of which are the Maneroo plains. This residence is built in the cottage style, with the back of it towards the river, having in front one of the finest gardens in the colony, regularly planned out by one evidently skilled in horticulture, and possessing every kind of European fruit, besides a few from warmer regions. At this altitude, although in latitude 35°, the climate is cool, enabling the proprietor to grow currants and gooseberries; at the same time, it is exposed to summer frosts, in common with all these mountain ranges, even as far north as the tropics of Australia. Mr. Wallace is well known throughout the colony for his

kindness and hospitality to strangers; and we had another opportunity, at his delightful residence, of seeing a colonist fully employed upon his estate in the multiplicity of occupations which an Australian settler has to attend to, although in these times they are very much interfered with. He was about building a more substantial residence than the one he had hitherto occupied. This is the usual course of successful men in Australia: they commence with a little, and, backed by industry and perseverance, they prosper; as soon as they have taken firm root in the country, and can spare the means, they then erect habitations in the wilderness they have reclaimed, which, as we have already stated, would be creditable in any part of England for the residences of country gentlemen or substantial farmers. A stop, however, was put to Mr. Wallace's intentions for the present, from the scarcity of workmen and the high wages demanded. The change brought about by the gold-discovery in this respect had made it unwise for the time to enter upon any building project or other improvement that required the labour of many hands; consequently the means he had provided and laid apart for the purpose of erecting a permanent dwelling were likely to be employed in speculating in gold. Men must go along with the general movement thus, no matter in what sphere of life they move, or they and their families will not keep their places in the social scale. It is all very well to say that "Jack is as good as his master" in the scramble for gold; in one sense he has always been so, and will be so as long as each depends upon his bodily strength and luck at the diggings; but in the race for fortune, which has now begun under a new phase in this new country, the same faculties that raised most of the leading men to their present position will carry them on foremost in the race. And as it would appear that the great mass of mankind are destined to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, after a short time matters in these gold regions will go on much as usual; men will find their places in the community best suited to them for the benefit of all classes of society.

We met here a brother of our host's, Dr. Wallace, well known throughout all circles of Sydney society as the

most attentive and amiable practitioner in the city. Alas! poor man, he was suffering in the last stage of consumption, with no hope before him; and since then he has been relieved from his earthly troubles. He was a most agreeable and superior man; and though one felt sad at beholding the wreck of such a noble vessel in the prime of life, yet the resignation with which he bore his fate commanded our respect in the highest degree, and was a lesson to us to bear with fortitude the ills to which our nature is subject.

On the following morning we left the hospitable dwelling of Mr. Wallace; and his poor sick brother most kindly shewed us part of the way to Major's-Creek diggings, distant from Braidwood about twelve miles. We pursued the path round the side of Mount Ebrington, and managed again to take the wrong track, which led us to the side of a rocky range, separating the waters that fall into the Shoalhaven River from those that flow into Major's Creek. However, we gained the right path, after catching a view of Mount Ebrington, which served as a guide, by which we threaded our way through brushwood, crossing ridges of rough and barren hills, until we emerged from a forest upon some enclosures on cleared ground. We had now reached the property of Mr. Badgery, the proprietor of the Major's-Creek gold-fields, which are two miles distant from his residence. Following a well-beaten road from Braidwood, we kept along the fences of Mr. Badgery's cultivated land, and in due time came to where there were said to be nearly 900 persons at work in and around the creek. Every one was said to have been successful, more or less, in finding gold, and some were realising large sums of money. At Major's Creek the land is particularly good, and the country around is a very fine open forest, with plenty of grass of the best description, possessing fattening properties; in proof of which we may mention, that the finest fat cattle which used to arrive in the Sydney market were sent from this property. Alas for the Sydney people! unless matters change greatly, it will be some time before they will receive any more of them. There is now collecting a multitude of people on the spot, who will soon consume the produce of this and many

other estates in the neighbourhood, at prices remunerative to the stockholder, without the expense attendant upon driving the animals such a distance to market.

The trees about Major's Creek are the white-gum and woolly-butt, with some stringy-bark upon the back-land. The rocks are chiefly granitic, and the soil at the banks of the creek a dark mould. The gold is here found in granite in a state of decay or disintegration; we think that geologists call it at this particular locality hornblende granite, among which it occurs in finer particles, and is of a darker hue than that found at the first discovered spots on the Turon and at Ophir, where the matrix is quartz. We were somewhat pleased at this fact of gold being found in granite; for upon our mentioning to one of the learned, during our travels, that we had seen what appeared to us to be granite near a rich deposit of gold, we were politely corrected, and assured that it could not be granite, as gold was never found in that formation. However, Major's Creek, and the gold-fields about Braidwood, prove that it is not well to be too confident. Not only has this locality disproved the assertions of learned pundits in this respect, but it has completely upset the conclusions that a gold country must necessarily be an unfertile country; for here the land is very excellent for cultivation immediately above the gold alluvium. Altogether the Major's-Creek discovery has puzzled those who assume to know more than others do about the hidden treasures of Australia, and of nature generally.

At this spot "the diggings" are upon private property; and the profit to the proprietor of the land is half the monthly license of 30*s.* from each person at work." We have mentioned that the fortunate possessor of this estate is Mr. Badgery; who, besides receiving this ample income from his land, realises large profits by supplying the diggers with butcher's meat and all sorts of necessaries from his store. In this he is assisted by Mrs. Badgery; a tidy, clever, bustling little woman, who, though probably never before accustomed to such an occupation, was, under the circumstances, quite equal to the task; in fact, what a wife should be, particularly in this young community—a helpmate to her husband. We heard an opinion of her, ex-

pressed loudly to himself, from a huge fellow who was leaning his heavy shoulders against the door-post, and watching her. "Ah!" said he, "that's what I call a *nugget* of a wife." Now, such of our readers as may not know what a "nugget" is, we beg to inform them that it is a smooth, water-worn piece of shining gold, varying from the size of a pea to a large turnip, and what the Californian and Australian gold-diggers consider the most satisfactory thing imaginable to possess. To liken Mrs. Badgery to a "nugget," therefore, was in his mind the greatest compliment he could possibly pay her.

Bell's Creek diggings are situated below Major's Creek, and farther down you come to those at Araluen River; the two former creeks may be considered the sources of the latter stream, which is a tributary of the Deua River, and forms a branch of the Moruya River, which flows into the sea 190 miles south of Sydney, in the vicinity of Broulee. These auriferous streams intersect the table-land around Braidwood; and for several miles below the junction of Bell's Creek with the Araluen the rocks are mostly granite. Below that again we were informed that there is a great deal of clay slate. The altitude of these deposits is not less than 1500 feet above the level of the sea, although scarcely a degree of longitude from the coast. The country in many places has a most park-like appearance, particularly at Araluen Vale, where all concur in describing the scenery as very fine and beautiful. Time did not admit of our going through these localities, in which large bodies of people were at work. We were informed that precious stones had been found amongst the gold, which were then in the possession of a jeweller in Sydney. Certainly this gold-finding, with such discoveries added to it, has become a most exciting employment. In the fortunes which turn up to some, it becomes a species of gambling, and the feeling which prompts the many to encounter the task is the same that moves the gambler. But there is this difference: the gambler, in addition to the love of gold, conducts his labours under the influence of the worst passions of our nature, and is often tempted to commit frauds upon his fellow-creatures; whereas the gold-digger earns even his prize nuggets by the sweat of his brow. This is a very

important difference, as it seems to us; and it is our hope that the result to the fortunes of the two classes will be as great.

We returned to Braidwood, and journeyed from thence to Arnprior, where we met a minister of the Scottish church, a Mr. Ross, who was on his way to the diggings, attracted by a sense of duty for the good of others. From Arnprior we started for Springfield, the estate of William Pitt Faithful, a distance of thirty-four miles, passing Boro on the way. The road goes through a very poor and scrubby country as far as the latter place, some sixteen miles distant. There is but one spot, about half-way in a valley, where there was any land worth attention; and as some persevering settler had built a neat house upon it, with some improvements, we inferred that there was some better land away from the track than that through which we passed. Before you come to Boro, which is merely a public-house, there is a little tolerably good pasture-land, near a creek, which at this time of the year is a chain of ponds. We saw some sheep feeding about in good order. In a few miles after leaving Boro, the aspect of the country improves greatly, and as you approach Springfield it becomes very fine. This place is within twelve miles of Goulburn, and probably it may challenge New South Wales for order, and, as far as we could perceive, good management. The name is most appropriate, and there are few places that will bear comparison with it. It possesses almost every advantage in position, climate, in the lay of the land, and the richness of the soil; and what is beyond all price, we were informed that in the severest droughts there was always plenty of water. Nature here has left but little for man to do; the ground is in large open spaces ready for the plough, with grass of the finest description upon it for the support of cattle.

Mr. Faithful, who was the first colonist to tread its greensward, at once fixed upon it for his future residence. The house and premises are situated upon a rising ground towards one side of a circle formed by hills, more or less distant. The higher hills are densely wooded, and look dark in the landscape; but the lower ones are only thinly timbered with the low-flooded gum, which affords ample shade.

Upon the wide open flat around there are many clumps of trees, clear from underwood, while the ground is thickly covered with grass. Though surrounded by hills, the view is not confined, for over these wooded undulations you see other hills beyond, and again high mountains in the far distance, in some places finely broken in the outline. The different shades occasioned by this variety of distance produce a very beautiful effect. Through one of these undulations the house is seen from the road. The diameter of what may be called the inner circle we should calculate to be about four miles. How large the whole estate is we do not know; judging from the number of sheep upon it, it must be very extensive, and valuable from the quality of the land. All the grazing and agricultural paddocks around the homestead are well fenced in, and every part about it has so much the appearance of comfort and order that we could imagine ourselves upon some well-managed large farm in England. The stables, the barns, and all the other buildings suitable for a farm of this magnitude, are most substantial. The garden is perfect of its kind; there are fruit-trees of every sort that will stand the climate, such as the peach, nectarine, loquat, apple, and the pear, with a beautiful show of flowers. Here we saw three siloes for storing grain, such as were constructed by the Egyptians to prepare for a dearth of corn in the land, which has often occurred in New South Wales, and may happen again during a long-continued drought. They are deep wells cut in the solid rock, hermetically sealed, and shaped like a seltzer-water bottle inside. One of them contained 1500 bushels of wheat. The place they were in was well chosen, and they were built in a workmanlike manner. Mr. Faithful said they answer the purpose admirably. It was impossible not to be struck with the difference in the appearance of such estates as this where the proprietor is resident, from those where he is not—the latter belonging to Sydney merchants, and the former possessed by bonâ-fide settlers. The dwelling-house on this estate is built in the cottage style, having been added to from time to time; it is the original house, and looks as if it had done its work; and the time has arrived for another to replace it, which we saw already being commenced. Perhaps, however, like all prudent

men, its excellent proprietor will be in no hurry to continue operations in the present state of the labour-market.

Leaving this beautiful residence, we once more pursued our way towards the main road, in the direction of Goulburn. The distance from Springfield to this town is twelve miles, over open plains, with the exception of a few trees on the higher parts of them to the left of the road; they were well grassed, and plenty of water on them. But again we were informed that this was a most favourable season; that often water was not to be procured upon them, and sometimes there was not a blade of grass. These plains are known as the Goulburn plains, called by the aborigines Mulwarree: they contain from 25 to 30,000 acres of land clear of trees. Through them runs the Mulwarree and Wollondilly rivers, at the junction of which, nearly in the midst of these plains, is situated the town of Goulburn, 125 miles from Sydney. Before the gold-discovery it contained nearly 1400 inhabitants. It possesses upwards of 250 houses, of which 140 are built of stone and brick. Some of the public buildings would be ornamental in the largest cities of these colonies; and the hotels and shops are equally elegant. It has postal communication with Sydney four days in the week. Once a week there is published in it a very creditable newspaper, called the *Goulburn Herald.* It is the town of most importance in the district of the same name, which embraces the southern portion of the county of Georgiana, and the whole of the county of Argyle, a police district which contained upwards of 6000 inhabitants before the gold-discovery. Now, however, most of the men have left; and one of the questions which interest the people of Goulburn is, the effect this wonderful discovery will have upon their town, which had risen to a state of great prosperity entirely through the industry of the colony and the wealth of its flocks and herds. Its sprightly little newspaper thus consoles its readers: "The once busy, bustling town of Goulburn is now reduced to a heretofore unknown state of quietude. Shops are lacking customers, some are closed; men are scarce; husbands have left their wives and families; servants have quitted their employment; in short, nearly all who could go have packed up and are off for the diggings

around Braidwood. Success has crowned the labours of nearly all who have quitted Goulburn for the gold regions in the neighbourhood. While we can deeply sympathise with the poor, bereaved, unhappy wives, and lament the apparent desertion of the male population, we can pleasantly console ourselves with the idea, that the ebb of its inhabitants will be succeeded by a flood of wealth and prosperity which those who have left it will bring back with them to their homes and families; but the present deserted condition of the town will not only be interrupted by the return of those who belong to it, but by thousands of others who will necessarily repair there as the general rendezvous of the southern diggings. We anticipate much. The good times are coming."

Whether these prospects will be realised for this pleasant little town or not, time will shew; we wish the enterprising people of Goulburn all success. In order to give the reader some idea of the literature at this inland town, we quote the following racy sketch, illustrative of the times, from the same local journal.

"The time passed so wearily whilst Browne was at the diggings. The morning was dull, the day was dull, and there was no comfort until the candles were lighted, after dark, when Mrs. Browne divided her sorrows with Mrs. Jones, who imparted hers in return, and so both felt mutually miserable, and much relieved thereby. There is a consolation to some minds in seeing others miserable. Poor Mary! she was getting heart-sick, and had formed a desperate resolve to go to the diggings herself, and bring back Browne, as she said, in spite of the commissioner and all the police; a resolution that Mrs. Jones highly applauded, and after taking a slight refreshment, hinted the possibility of getting back Jones by the same means; and by way of shewing their earnestness, they agreed to take a cold fowl and ham with them, and book their places in the Red Rover for the diggings.

Mrs. Jones went home full of this stern resolve, and Mary declared, with tears in her eyes, that she would die—that she would—or succeed in her attempt; for what was life and gold-dust without Browne?

Sorrow and sleep bowed down Mary's eyelids. She

had put her hair in paper for the night, and was tying the strings of her night-cap, when the sound of a horse stopping at the door made her listen earnestly.

"Wo!" said the voice outside.

"Goodness gracious!" said Mary.

"Softly—wo, old girl! Quietly does it!"

"It is Browne himself!"

How changed he was, to be sure! He was overrun with hair, which had spread over his face like weeds over neglected land, the promontory of his nose being only visible through the scrubs which, from his lips downwards to his chin, were impervious. No Leichhardt razor had penetrated there; it was all "Mallee." His skin was bronzed, and his hands were hardened by continuous toil. But he was the master of 100 ounces of Ballarat gold, which made his fustian trousers quite picturesque, his blue shirt a manly garb, and his battered straw hat more sightly than a beaver. Browne was successful—and success is a test of merit.

Who but a wife can appreciate the joy experienced on the return of a husband after a long absence, especially if that absence has been passed at the diggings successfully? Mrs. Browne cried, then laughed, and cried again, as Browne made his appearance. She was delirious with joy, as she clasped Browne in her arms, and called him her 'nugget.' She poured out endearments by troy weight, and regarded Browne as a 'specimen' not to be parted with even at 3*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.* per ounce. He was above standard value. True, her protestations may have had a dash of the auriferous in them; but what has not at the present moment?—and Mrs. Browne is but mortal.

"You've been away a long time," said Mary.

"My word, you may say that," replied Browne; "and to some purpose too. What do you think of Geelong, now? Like to go home to your mother, eh?"

"Now, Browne, don't; I'm so glad you've come back."

"Back before I intended, Mary, glad as I am to see you; and much better off than I thought I should be when I started for Buninyong, on what you called a cock-and-a-bull errand."

"I never did, Browne. I never used such an improper expression; and if I did, which I didn't, it should not be repeated now. By the by, what do you think, Browne? Mrs. Jones says that Mr. Jones will give all his gold to her."

"Will he?" remarked Browne, briefly.

"Why, of course he will, Browne. Who else should he give it to but to his wife?"

"Ah! to whom indeed?" said Brown. "Better than throwing it away, or spending it in nobblers, and getting into the station-house, and being fined next morning!"

"How you do go on, Browne!" retorted Mary.

"True," said Browne, "a choice of evils. The foolishness of the wife against the folly of the husband. Equal weight, balanced by Commissioner Chance and Commissioner Appetite, and turned by Accident."

"What a fright you do look, Browne!" said Mary, turning the conversation. "No wonder they made you pay license, and refused to be responsible for you by escort. The governor was quite right to issue a proclamation against such things; and a hole eight feet square is quite enough for men with such beards as you've got, Browne. You look like an underground animal—a mole."

"I'm sleepy, Mary, and tired from a long ride—sixty miles. Ha!"

"To see me, my dear,—your wife,—your own Mary. Come, tell me all about it, whilst supper is getting ready. —Well, he's gone to sleep."

Browne was snoring, and muttering of holes, cradles, tin dishes, creeks, and water-holes; and suddenly starting up, captured his own wife by the wrist, and declared he would walk her before the Commissioner.

"I was only putting it in the tea-caddy, Browne."

"Putting what in the tea-caddy?" said Browne.

"Why, this little leathern bag, to be sure, that you had in your side-pocket. There now, Browne," said Mary, putting her little hand on his mouth—"it's no use talking; I want lots of little things—so sit down to supper, and tell me all about the diggings."

CHAPTER XIV.

JOURNEY FROM GOULBURN TO SYDNEY.

Proposed railway from Sydney to Goulburn—Advanced state of the farms around Goulburn—Deserted appearance of old estates—Estate of Arthurslee—Inn at the Cross-roads—Vine Lodge—Mr. Nicholson's farm—The village of Bong-Bong—A family going to the diggings—Township of Picton—Vanderville dairy-farm—Brownlow-Hill estate—Town of Liverpool—Parramatta road—Approach to Sydney from the southern road—Taverns—The Hay-market—George Street—View from the Telegraph Hill—Sydney Cove—Population of Sydney—Churches, colleges, and schools—Institutions, newspapers, &c.

FEW countries of equal extent are naturally better adapted for railways than Australia: its extensive plains, its undulating prairie-land, even its mountain-chains, with their unbroken ridges, are admirably suited for these iron roads; and when we consider that there are so few navigable rivers—those natural highways—to open up the resources of the interior, this mode of communication with the coast will prove doubly advantageous to the colonists. The greatest obstacle to overcome on the territory of the south-eastern section, over which we have been travelling, will be to cross the great dividing range, so as to connect the eastern with the southern settlements, and bring the produce of the western rivers to the out-ports on the coast. The subject has been one of serious consideration among the colonists of New South Wales for many years back, and several schemes have been proposed where to lay down the first railroad, and how to raise the capital necessary for such an undertaking. The most feasible plan was that of a line from Sydney to Goulburn via Parramatta, a distance of 123 miles, as it would pass through a country rich in pastoral and agricultural produce; the carriage of which to the colonial metropolis would pay expenses, in-

dependently of the passenger traffic. For this purpose a preliminary survey was made, and the gradients on the proposed line presented no great difficulty to overcome in accomplishing such a work at a moderate outlay of capital. A company was subsequently formed, and a portion of the shares were submitted to the English public; but there proved no inclination on the part of home-capitalists to subscribe, and the colonial shareholders were not sufficiently numerous to raise the means for carrying out the project, so the matter has been for some years in abeyance. Now, in the blush of their golden prosperity, it is again talked of, and means are likely to be forthcoming both at home and abroad; but the difficulty they have now to contend with is the want of labour. We have no hesitation in stating our conviction, that under good management such a company cannot fail to afford a profitable investment for capital.

The face of the country about Goulburn, with its hills and dales and plains, sometimes altogether clear of trees, and at other places lightly timbered, presenting that scenery so peculiar to Australia, is certainly exceedingly beautiful. The time and the particular season that we passed through was, as we have before remarked, a very favourable one for the pasture-lands, consequently there was abundance of grass for the numerous flocks in this district; but in dry seasons, we were informed that there was a great scarcity of pasture, at which times the stock suffered much. These plains and the adjacent country, as stated in the preceding chapter, are watered by the Mulwarree and Wollondilly and their tributaries, which we beheld running in their course like the clear brooks of the mother-country. It will be seen, on reference to the map, that they form the sources of the Hawkesbury River, a stream which empties itself into the sea fourteen miles north of Sydney. The farms and estates in the neighbourhood are of the highest class, and present all those improvements in cultivation and building which old-established settlers only have the time and means of introducing and erecting.

After leaving Goulburn for the north, you ascend some hills, over which the great south road passes from Sydney. From the summit of these hills there is a fine

view of the town of Goulburn and its environs, situated as it is in the midst of extensive plains, surrounded by distant high lands. We kept the main road only for six miles, when we turned off to the left, and pursued our way along the course of the Wollondilly, which we had to cross several times on our journey; and for the next twenty-four miles we passed through a very unsatisfactory country, until we reached the boundary of the estate of Arthurslee, situated in the county of Argyle, near Eden Forest, 100 miles from Sydney.

There was a large labouring population at one time amongst these hills, and then the landholders prospered; where the soil was good for any thing, considerable improvements had been made in useful and appropriate buildings for agricultural purposes; but now their homesteads are lapsing into decay; you can easily distinguish the difference between these old establishments and the newer ones you pass on the way. Every thing around gave evidence of our approaching that part of the colony which had flourished in the palmy days of the assignment system, and which has decayed since that system was done away with; and we passed many large establishments completely deserted and going to destruction: in every direction buildings, fences, and other works of labour are going to wreck. And the gold-discovery appears to have completed the work of ruin; at all events for the present, for the country seems to have lost all its men; you meet with a few shepherds certainly, but there is no bustle about the homesteads, and all improvements have stopped: it seemed to us a deserted region; and the idea was strengthened as we rode over the pasture-land for the latter portion of the way, where it looked very barren and ill-clothed with grass. The cattle we saw grazing likewise appeared in poor condition; and although the sheep were a little better, still, from the scantiness of the grass, we should suppose that it would require double the extent of pasture-land to feed them upon than is usually allowed in the colony. Under this head we must not class all the estates in this locality; for the lands that belonged to Major Lockyer, and one or two others, were much better; but still the general aspect of the country did not please us.

Arthurslee is an estate of some 18,000 acres, the greater portion of which is inferior land. There are, however, a few thousand acres of very excellent soil on the banks of the Wollondilly, which meanders round part of the estate; if the whole of the property was equally well grassed as this portion, Arthurslee would be one of the most valuable estates in New South Wales. Crossing the river, we entered this section, and found it a beautiful open forest country, not too hilly, but undulating, with a sufficient number of trees for shade and ornament. The flocks we saw feeding on this land were looking remarkably well, and they are valued for the fine quality of their fleeces. Though the grasses in this locality are the best food for fine-woolled sheep, yet they do not possess those fattening properties which the grasses in the neighbourhood of Goulburn are prized for. The buildings upon this estate are not very extensive, the cottage is small, and the whole premises, with the exception of a large shearing and wool shed, are in a ruinous state; this will not be regretted, however, by the future possessor of this property, for the homestead, strange to say, is not nearer water fit for house use than a mile. One would have imagined that a convenient supply of water was the first thing to consider in choosing the site for a residence; but the proprietor, in this case, like one we have already mentioned, may have been determined by fancy for the scenery in fixing upon this spot, neglecting that which is of far greater importance. There are many beautiful spots on the bank of the river suitable for this purpose; and the probabilities are that the next possessor will form his establishment where the stream is more handy. As a sheep-farm this estate is and will always be of value; at present it carries from eight to ten thousand sheep, and the rough land would carry a thousand head of cattle; but for cultivation, judging from that which is under tillage near to the house, we should say that the country is not well adapted for it; nor did we see any much better around.

Continuing our journey from Arthurslee in an easterly direction, we passed through a most beautiful open sheep country for two miles, towards the junction of Paddy's River with the Wollondilly; the latter forming a boundary

of the estate. Our route then for several miles lay through a hilly forest country, very scrubby, and well known as the Wombat Brush, situated in the county of Camden, near the Wingecarribee River. After passing through this brush with its iron-bark trees, the country improved all the way, until we reached the great south road again, at a spot called the Cross-roads, where there is a tolerably comfortable road-side inn, about sixteen miles from Arthurslee. Diverging again from this point, we visited the property of Mr. Badgery, brother to the owner of the gold-field at Major's Creek; his residence is called Vine Lodge, Sutton Forest, and is situated about six miles from the Cross-roads inn. It need scarcely be said that Mr. Badgery was at the diggings assisting his brother, and that nearly all the men on the estate had left with him. Mrs. Badgery, with the women, were alone upon the farm, all doing their best to keep matters from falling behind. The property is of considerable extent, well enclosed, and much of it under cultivation. It is divided into two farms, the other homestead being named Ivy Hill, and occupied by a Scotchman, to all appearance a most industrious man. Mr. Badgery had adopted a plan which, in this upland, heavily-timbered country, answered well—he destroyed the trees by "ringing" them; that is, cutting off a strip of bark round the butt of the tree, which prevents the sap ascending, and thereby kills them. The result was, that the finest grass sprung up where the ground became exposed to the sun and rain, unobstructed by the foliage of the trees. Of course, it will take some years before this land can be cleared of the dead timber; but the plan has two advantages—plenty of good firewood, and immediate profit from the quantity of stock he is able to rear on it. All this tract of country is well watered and wooded with the box, woolley-butt, apple-tree, and occasionally groves of the wattle-tree, or acacia.

Not many miles from Mr. Badgery's, and within four miles of Bong-Bong—a small township east of the main road—resides Mr. Nicholson, who was formerly harbour-master at Sydney; he has a most comfortable house, with an excellent garden, and a good deal of land under cultivation. He is a bluff old sailor, and gave us a hearty wel-

come. Excited by the wonderful discoveries of gold so near to his property, he was determined to look about his own land for a "digging," and at the time we arrived he was engaged in sinking a hole with this view. He was not then successful; nor have we heard whether he has discovered any since. After partaking of an excellent breakfast we thanked him for his politeness, and continued our journey.

As you proceed from here towards Bong-Bong, the road is fenced in on both sides; and occasionally you see tolerably good houses. On your right, before you enter the village, and some distance off the road, the dwelling of a successful settler appears finely situated in the middle of a large cultivated paddock, and commanding a view of the valley and the village below. Bong-Bong is a very exposed place, and most uninteresting. It has a small church, and a number of small houses, with a few people crawling about, as though they were anxious to follow those already gone to the gold-fields. Formerly the main road passed near this spot over the Mittagong range of mountains, to avoid which the new road was made by Berrima. This road in fine weather, when we crossed the range, was nearly impassable for heavily-laden drays; and we calculated that it must be quite so in wet weather. The surrounding scenery is picturesque; and there seemed to be plenty of grass even upon the highest part of the land. Descending into the valley you are agreeably surprised at the appearance of a windmill, with neat enclosures around it, which gives the country a very pleasing aspect. As we proceeded onwards, we noticed some small cottages with enclosed paddocks, that had been abandoned by their tenants for the gold-fields. In most of those that were inhabited we saw only women and children. In ten miles after we had left Bong-Bong, we came to a place called Madigong, belonging to a carrier of the name of Green, who had settled himself down comfortably upon his own freehold; and there was every prospect of his doing well. He had a considerable piece of ground enclosed, which he found to be rich soil; and he informed us that the country all around, though subject to severe summer frosts, was very good for stock. The valley through which we were journeying at

this time is bounded by considerable hills, covered with box and wattle-trees,—indications of good soil. In this part of the territory it is very possible that many families may establish themselves in small farms, for which this upland country seems well adapted. Already we heard of successful gold-seekers having invested in small holdings; and there is little doubt that many will do the same in other parts of the colony.

From Madigong to the main road is about four miles, through a forest of box-trees of gigantic dimensions, the ground being tolerably well covered with grass. The road continued still very bad; and as it had been abandoned for the new route by Berrima, some seventeen miles from this point, it is not likely that much will be done to repair it at the public expense; so that the settlers must waddle through it, as they did but a very few years since along the country roads in England.

Within a mile of the point of junction, between the new and old roads, is Keighran's public-house, where you will find good entertainment for man and beast. After you get into the new road it is decidedly better travelling; but the country is still scrubby and mountainous. Seven miles from Keighran's you arrive at the Woolpack inn, kept by John Jones, which is a very fair description of a roadside inn. Here we found every one in a state of great excitement, in consequence of some news relative to the gold-diggings in the south, brought down by the mail. Not only those who had bodily strength to encounter the fatigues of a long journey and hard work, but many who appeared unfit for the task, had abandoned their usual occupations. On the road we encountered a very old man and his wife, and their son, his wife, and child, with all their worldly goods stowed away in a cart, proceeding cheerily to the great points of attraction. The old couple said they did not covet the gold so much for their own sakes, but that it was "a good chance for Jack; they would work for him, his wife, and the young un, and for as many more as God would bless them with." We did not see a party more likely to do well; and they had our best wishes for their success.

The soil is a little better about Jones's, but far from

being good; it is seldom, indeed, that you find any good land for agriculture in such a high region. From here the road passes through a poor hilly country, with scarcely any signs of being occupied by settlers. And this description of country continues all the way, until you reach the township of Picton, situated in the county of Camden, forty-six miles from Sydney, on the Stone-quarry rivulet. This is a pretty little village in the midst of picturesque hills, and built upon private property belonging to Major Antell, who, with Mr. Harper and Mr. Bunker, possess all the valley and the surrounding hills, estimated to contain about ten thousand acres of fine land, and very well watered. As may be imagined, we found this embryo town almost deserted; at the best of its existence, it did not contain more than one hundred and fifty inhabitants. Around it we saw some of the finest wheat-fields we had yet passed on our journey, and we were informed that in no part of the colony was better grown.

At this beautiful spot we turned from the main-road and struck off to the left along a by-path amongst the hills leading to Vanderville, the residence of Mr. John Wild, situated on Werriberri Creek, seven miles from Picton, and twelve miles from Camden. The intermediate country is very good, but hilly; and you remark, as you pass through the valley on leaving Picton, on a part of Mr. Harper's estate, that the Scotch thistle has been permitted to grow in places so as to overrun the land, rendering it quite a nuisance to the agriculturist. Approaching Vanderville you ascend into quite a mountainous region, where you attain an altitude probably of not less than 1500 feet above the level of the sea at this spot. The homestead is beautifully situated in a valley of rich land, through which run the Werriberri and Waterfall creeks. This is a cattle-station, where dairy operations are carried on to a great extent; Mr. Wild milking daily one hundred and five cows, making from their milk one hundredweight of cheese per day. For a dairy this farm is admirably situated, being cool, and possessing always the best of water. The proprietor has eleven children, whom he now finds the value of; for without his sons the whole property would have been neglected, and the dairy opera-

tions at a stand-still; for they milk, make cheese, and do all that is requisite and necessary to be done on a farm of this kind. Through this beautiful valley it is proposed that the railway from Sydney to Goulburn should be made. But when? Echo replies, But when?

From Vanderville we proceeded to Brownlow Hill, the seat of A. M'Leay, Esq., son of the late colonial secretary, on the Mount Hunter rivulet, about six miles from Camden. For eight miles we passed over a considerable range of hills, called Tuck range. The road then passes through a valley well cultivated; the crops were standing, and promised a good harvest. All about this quarter is very charming. The residence of Mr. M'Leay is perfect. It is situated on a knoll rising out of the level ground on the north bank of the stream, which has been levelled at the top; and round greater part a terrace is built, with an ornamental garden on the slopes around it, displaying flowers of the most gorgeous hues, and shrubberies of the most tasteful description, in the midst of which is a large aviary. There are two approaches to the house,—one at the back, and one in front, both up an inclined plane through the shrubbery, very pretty and well kept. Altogether it is a delightful retreat, and quite the residence of a gentleman possessing good taste and ample means to display it. The alluvial flats around the house towards the rivulet are of the richest mould, and of considerable extent; and the undulating hills behind are picturesque and park-like. We had hoped to have the good fortune of finding Mr. M'Leay at home, bu the was absent; at the same time he was well represented by his hospitable and amiable lady.

This part of the country being within such a short distance of the southern metropolis, it has many advantages in the presence of a resident gentry. Among them is Mr. Cooper of Wivenhoe, near the village of Narellan, on the Cow-pasture or Nepean River. From his residence you command a view of Camden church, about three miles and a half distant. Here is the commencement of the Cow-pastures, the valuable estate of Mr. M'Arthur, one of the oldest colonists. Our route lay another way; and therefore we missed seeing a property of which so much

has been said. A numerous tenantry on small holdings abound in and around the neighbourhood; and the sooner, in this and other localities, such large tracts of land are divided into reasonable-sized farms, the better it will be for all parties; for we cannot see how the proprietors are to carry on their large agricultural establishments in the present altered state of these colonies. With those properties which can alone be occupied as sheep or cattle runs it may be different.

From Wivenhoe we proceeded by the Cobbitty-road to Liverpool, a borough town of New South Wales, situated on George's River, which flows into Botany Bay. Through this town is the leading thoroughfare from Sydney to all the southern districts. On either side of the road, as we passed along, we observed some decent-looking places, and in many parts the scenery is pleasing; but altogether it is very uninteresting. Liverpool, distant about twenty miles from Sydney, was formerly a place of great promise; but now it is little better than a deserted town. There are said to be about 120 houses in it; and the buildings are as neat as any other town in the colony, with a population of some 600 or 700 inhabitants. The town is planned out on a large scale, with wide streets and a macadamised road; the former, however, are still covered with grass for want of traffic. It was raining heavily as we entered the town, which did not improve the forlorn aspect of the place. The few people we spoke to wore a dejected air, and seemed to entertain no hope of the future. They looked forward to the establishment of a railway to revive their drooping spirits and silent town. Together with Richmond, Windsor, and Campbelltown, it returns one member to the Legislative Council.

From Liverpool to Sydney there is a turnpike-road all the way, rather dusty in dry weather, and muddy in the wet season; the land on each side is enclosed by substantial post-and-rail fences. The soil, from what we could judge, appeared of a very poor character; and we were informed that its virgin properties for cultivation had been impoverished many years ago, when it was abandoned by the plough, and allowed to return to its natural state. This is apparent from the young growth of the timber,

which covers it densely in many places; scarcely a vestige is to be seen of the giant trees which composed the primeval forest that grew thereon when the colony was first established. There is not much that is worthy of notice on the road, excepting a very substantial and elegant bridge over South Creek, a tributary of George's River. After travelling fourteen miles along this uninteresting road, you are agreeably surprised by suddenly emerging into the Parramatta road, about six miles from Sydney, and opposite one of the most characteristic roadside inns that we have seen in the country. Here, as we mingled amongst the pedestrians, horsemen, carts, and carriages which gave life to this thoroughfare leading to the city of Sydney, we no longer supposed ourselves travelling in the land of gold and gum-trees, tea and damper. There was so much of what is called civilisation in the aspect of the people and the roadside scenery, so much that looked thoroughly English, that it required no great stretch of imagination for us to suppose ourselves suddenly conveyed to a turnpike-road in the mother country, instead of journeying along one at the antipodes. We became so strongly impressed with the fact that we were now approaching the seat of a great and refined community, that we felt ashamed of our rough appearance amongst the smartly dressed people who passed us on their way to the city; therefore, after refreshing ourselves at one of the inns, we trimmed our exterior, which had grown to seed in the wilderness. As we trotted along the well-worn road, we were delighted with every thing we saw and met by the wayside. Here were rows of neat suburban cottages, —there a stately mansion in the midst of a beautiful garden, which told of the residences of wealthy citizens, who had the means to retire from the bustle and dust of the city; again we passed comfortable-looking inns, with their swinging sign-posts; and the people we met looked at us with those uninquisitive glances which only come from the inhabitants of a large town.

Passing through a toll-bar, in half a mile you enter the precincts of the city of Sydney, where the road has been cut through a hill—very much like a railway-cutting in England. A short distance beyond this you obtain a view

of the city; and being somewhat upon elevated ground, the prospect before you is extensive and exceedingly picturesque. Upon your left hand appears Darling Harbour; where there is always to be seen a number of large square-rigged vessels lying at anchor, besides steamboats and coasting craft. On its western shore stands Pyrmont, a suburb of Sydney, built upon a hill of sandstone exposed to the full strength of the sun's rays, without a tree to relieve the glare; presenting a striking contrast to the "Glebe," another suburb adjacent to it, which is densely covered with exotic trees and part of the original forest, sheltering most agreeably the elegant residences built upon it. On the opposite shore you see the mass of houses which form greater part of the city, extending for upwards of a mile and a half along the point of land on which they are built, gradually rising from the low ground before you to the height of about 250 feet at the extreme point, upon which is erected a telegraph station and saluting battery. Altogether this peep of Darling Harbour is very fine, and we have seen it produce a beautiful dioramic effect, when the setting sun threw Pyrmont into the shade, and its ruby beams became reflected, like glittering lamps, from the windows on the Sydney side. But this is not the whole extent of view commanded by this position: on your right hand, as far as the eye can reach across a small valley, are streets rising above one another of substantial stone-built houses, until they crown the heights in the background; while in the foreground there is a church of no mean appearance, a large public building, and several chimneys belonging to manufactories of various kinds; all serving to give you an idea of the wealth and importance of this metropolitan city at our antipodes. We must not omit to mention, that although this view of Sydney presents a most agreeable and striking effect to the eye of the stranger who enters it for the first time in that direction, still it can bear no comparison with the unequalled beauty of the scenery, and the aspect of the city, as you approach it from the harbour.

Descending the slope where the road leads into the town, you enter Parramatta-street, formed of straggling shops and dwelling-houses; on your right hand is an exten-

sive building used as a distillery and a steam flour-mill, adjoining which stands the largest brewery in the colony. Proceeding onward in this direction for about half a mile, you come to the Hay-market, passing on your way Christ Church and the Benevolent Asylum. All along the road through this suburb looks like the approach to an English market-town: the small green-grocers, with bundles of hay and straw at their doors; the dealers in odds and ends for country customers; the blacksmith's forge, with the horses waiting to be shod; and the snug roadside inns, where carriers and small settlers with dairy and farm produce put up, whom you may see sitting on side benches outside the doors, smoking their pipes and quaffing their tankards of ale; while the more noisy customers may be heard dancing inside to the sound of a fiddle. The most uproarious and extravagant frequenters of these tap-rooms, it will be readily supposed, are now the successful returned gold-diggers. Should you have the curiosity to venture into one of them, you will see how lavishly these men squander their earnings: "Easy come, easy go," is their maxim. At the same time, drunkenness has not increased among the people in Sydney much beyond its former extent. And it must be remembered that the great bulk of these people cannot be called habitual drunkards; for during their occupations in the interior they have no means of indulging in stronger stimulants than tea and tobacco: hence when they arrive at any of the principal towns, with their purses well filled, they launch into the extremes of dissipation, like sailors after a long cruise.

The Hay-market is a large open space at the foot of Brickfield hill, with a substantial market-house in the middle of it, surmounted by a turret-clock. Ascending Brickfield hill, you pass along a wide and airy street, with rows of two and three storied houses. When you arrive at the top of it, you enter George-street, the principal street in the city, and about a mile and a half long. In a newly-settled country like Australia, the traveller expects to find all the streets of the towns and cities laid out upon the most approved modern plans—wide, straight, and intersecting each other at right angles—which we have found to be the case in most of the towns we have hitherto described;

but this street, and several others in Sydney, are an exception to the rule, and they *meander* through the motley groups of buildings in as picturesque a fashion as any streets you may find in the oldest towns of the mother country. In fact, Sydney resembles very much an English seaport-town; and you are reminded at every step as you proceed along this street of the strictly British character of its inhabitants; the same bustling throng is to be found here fresh as the imported wares from Manchester or Birmingham; the carts, cabs, omnibuses, and private equipages which roll along give a life to the street that is thoroughly British. The same kind of butcher-boys and baker-men, cab-drivers, and 'bus-conductors; even the constables who quietly pace the pavement are the veritable metropolitan police, from their hats to their truncheons. Here you pass a church in the midst of its old-fashioned burial-ground; a little farther on you see the police-office, with the stocks erected outside; next you come to a spacious covered-in market thronged with buyers from daylight until midnight on Saturdays; then you pass the Royal Hotel, a perfect leviathan of an inn. On your reaching the Post-office you come to the region of banking-houses, auction-rooms, and merchants' offices, where most of the financial and commercial transactions of the colony are arranged: this takes you past the old barrack-square, now deserted by the military, and all improvements at a stand-still for want of labour; then the street narrows with loftier houses on each side until you come to far-famed Sydney Cove; beyond this the buildings are fewer, and only on one side of the street, when finally they cease at its extreme end at Dawes Point, where a glorious peep of the harbour, with its busy shipping, meets the eye: thus presenting a complete panorama of English customs and institutions, established and perpetuated by colonial enterprise.

Returning south along another street branching from this point, you ascend the flag-staff hill, the highest part of the city. From here you have a most extensive view of Sydney and its environs; and the mingled beauties of land and water which surround you have a most charming effect. So tortuous do the ramifications of the harbour appear from this height, that it looks very much like a hilly country

with the valleys inundated; and the snow-white appearance of the drift-sand which covers the suburban hills to the south remind you of snow, where it is almost never known to fall. All around you there appears something anomalous in the landscape; yet on a clear day—and when is it otherwise in Sydney?—the view from this eminence is surpassingly beautiful. At every point of the compass the artist can select a distinct picture. Looking towards the east, he has the placid waters of Port Jackson lying at his feet, locked in the arms of a succession of picturesque headlands, and studded with small islands; the white sails of every description of boat and ship are at all times to be seen entering and departing from its snug haven. Turning to the north, he sees the main arm of this estuary separating the land by a narrow channel, and the opposite shore studded with little villas in fine contrast with the rocky cliffs on which they are built. To the westward, the glassy surface of this tortuous inlet is seen penetrating with many arms into the bosom of the country, which appears low and undulating, until it is bounded in the distance by the far-famed Blue Mountains, clad in that hue which the artist delights to throw into his picture, and which gave rise to their name. In the foreground, the suburbs of Balmain, Pyrmont, and the Glebe, separated from each other by Johnstone's Bay, and from Sydney by Darling Harbour, are all crowded with picturesque objects, which give life and animation to the scene. Turning to the south and south-east, the extent of Sydney is seen from this commanding position to great advantage; you look down upon the densest part of the city, where the masts from the shipping in the Cove mingle with the narrow streets and high houses which crowd around it, giving you an idea of its mercantile importance as a seaport-town; and yet it presents very little of that dirty aspect to be seen about a British port, particularly about noon on a summer day, when the appearance of the mass of buildings which compose the city, so white and smokeless, suggests the idea of their being marble structures. There are few climates in the world less destructive to the adornments of architecture than that of Australia; and Sydney, being built upon quarries of freestone, has inexhaustible materials for

building; still John Bull, in his haste to make money, has neglected these advantages, and this beautifully-situated town cannot as yet boast of many elegant public buildings. Amongst the most conspicuous are, the New Government-house, the Australian Subscription Library, the Court-house, and the churches of various denominations.

Descending from this hill towards the east, you pass through several streets until you come to Sydney Cove, where you see at once the natural capabilities of this harbour. Here the passenger arriving from England has none of those disagreeable contingencies to encounter on landing which he experiences at Victoria, as we have described at Melbourne and Geelong; for at once the vessel casts anchor within a cable's length of the shore, and in a few days she is hauled alongside a wharf as snugly as in the London or Liverpool Docks. To families who are desirous of establishing themselves as comfortably in these colonies as the present state of circumstances will admit, Sydney is the preferable spot to land at; and we would strongly advise strangers to take up even a temporary residence in this city, as the least expensive place to live in, if they wish to become initiated into the ways of the colonists.

The population of the city and suburbs of Sydney may be taken at 60,000, although since the gold-discoveries it has been fluctuating between that and 50,000; and the proportion of males to females, which was formerly in excess by 5000, is becoming more equalised. Much has been said concerning the people of Sydney, to their disparagement, of the expression of their faces—what some writers are pleased to call their villanous-looking countenances; for our parts we are not such critical observers as these would-be physiognomists, nor did we feel inclined to inquire into the history of every person we came in contact with: we were satisfied with the demeanour and generally respectable appearance of the population. Every thing the stranger sees, as we have remarked elsewhere, is thoroughly English; and the probability is, that the great mass of the people you meet on the streets are English emigrants. According to the census, two-thirds of the population are either members of the Church of England

or other Protestant denominations, the remaining third being Roman Catholics and other persuasions. We never in any part of England were in a town where the Sabbath was better observed; and the many highly respectable, eminent, and zealous ministers, and also the many charitable and useful institutions which abound there, are a full answer to those individuals who prejudice our minds to think unfavourably of this community.

"The public institutions of Sydney are numerous. Until lately there were four colonial banks in operation; there are still two, the Bank of New South Wales and the Commercial Bank. There are likewise two Anglo-colonial banks, the Bank of Australasia and the Union Bank of Australia. The Bank of Australasia is a chartered bank, the other four are joint-stock banks, and all are banks of issue. Besides these, there are the Savings Bank, and the British Colonial Bank and Loan Company; likewise the Australian Agricultural Company, the Australian Steam Navigation Company, the Sydney Gas-light Company, the Australian Sugar Company, the Sydney Salting Company, the Australian Trust Company, the Scottish Australian Investment Company, the Sydney Alliance Marine, Life, and Fire Insurance Companies, the Australian General Assurance Company, and the Australian Colonial and General Life Assurance Annuity Company.

There is a plentiful supply of religious establishments of different denominations in the city: Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and Wesleyans, as well as members of the Independent or Congregational Church, and of the Baptist Chapel, may all find faithful and zealous ministers attached to their different creeds. The Society of Friends have likewise a chapel, and the Jews a synagogue, in the city.

Of religious societies, there are the Auxiliary Bible Society of New South Wales, the Australian Diocesan Committee, the Australian Religious Tract Society, an auxiliary of the British Catholic Institution, the Wesleyan Auxiliary Missionary Society, the Ladies' Bible Association, and the Bethel Union.

There are several charitable and useful institutions, of which the following are the chief: the Benevolent So-

ciety, the Sydney Dispensary, the Sydney Strangers' Friend Society, the Sydney Dorcas Society, New South Wales Temperance Society, total abstinence societies, and several benefit or friendly societies.

The public establishments for education are also numerous. There are, the Australian University (having professors at high salaries); the Sydney College, and the Australian College (which, however, might with greater propriety be denominated high-schools); St. Mary's Archiepiscopal Seminary; the Normal Institution, and the Australian School Society. In addition to these, there are six schools attached to the Church of England, seven to the Presbyterian Church, six to the Roman Catholic Church, and one to the Wesleyan; all receiving support from the government. Besides these, there are an Independent and a Baptist school, and several others, which receive no assistance from the state.

Connected with the subject of education are literary and scientific associations. Among these may be mentioned, the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, the Australian Subscription Library and Reading-rooms, the Church Book Society, the Clerical Book Society, the New South Wales Law Library, and the Australian Museum and Botanic Gardens.

Sydney can also boast of masonic, odd-fellows', and other lodges; the Australian Club, a glee-club, and two cricket-clubs. Nor is she deficient in the number of her legal and medical advisers; for there are no fewer than 40 barristers, 110 attorneys, solicitors, and proctors, and upwards of 200 qualified medical practitioners.

The press is also flourishing. There are two daily newspapers, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Empire;* the *Sydney Chronicle*, published three times a week; the *Government Gazette* and the *Australian*, twice a week; eight weekly publications, the *Atlas, Squatter, Courier, Times, Sentinel, Bell's Life, Gleaner, Age.*

The corporation act, 6th Vict. No. 3, declares the town of Sydney to be a city, and incorporates the inhabitants thereof, dividing it into six wards, viz. Gipps, Bourke, Brisbane, Macquarie, Cook, Philip. Four councillors are elected for each ward; from these, or from citizens qua-

lified to be councillors, six aldermen are chosen; and from the aldermen and councillors the mayor is elected. The mayor is an annual appointment. Four of the councillors retire annually, while three of the aldermen remain in office for three years, and the other three for six years."*

* Wells' Australian Geographical Dictionary.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TURON DIGGINGS.

Remarks upon the gold-discovery—Peaceable demeanour of the diggers—Road to the Turon—Formation of the country between Sydney and the gold-fields—The Parramatta road—Town of Parramatta—The Bathurst road—Ascending the Blue Mountains—Crossing over Mount Victoria—The Vale of Clywd—Hartley and Bowenfels—Mudgee road—Keening's public-house—Bandanora Creek—Reflections on the gold-discovery—Demagogue agitators—Diggers working at Golden Point—Prodigious labours of the miners—Good conduct of the people—Floods on the Turon—Hardships of a gold-digger's life.

A GREAT deal has been said about the excitement which prevailed among the colonists upon the announcement of the gold-discovery by Mr. Hargreaves; and some English journalists have commented rather unfairly upon the first adventurers who were attracted to the gold-field. They were informed by the colonial press, that men of all classes and occupations in the community rushed to the Bathurst country in hopes of obtaining prizes in the gold lottery; and thereupon took the opportunity of making ill-natured remarks upon the character of the people of New South Wales generally, and of those who belonged to the upper walks of society in particular. With regard to the latter portion of the community who proceeded thither, it would have been a great wonder to us had they acted otherwise, and the most enterprising men in the colony quietly looked on, while others seized the golden opportunity. As far as actual excitement carried the mass of the people, we question if there was any thing like the agitation which would have been created among the populace of the mother country under similar circumstances. Let us imagine, for example, such a discovery to be made in the British Isles—that gold was found by the ton-weight on the Cumberland

hills or Welsh mountains, and that it was open to all and sundry to gather it—what classes of the community would be foremost in the scramble? Certainly not the labouring class alone; for we cannot suppose that the badly-remunerated portion of the educated classes would calmly stand by and see the golden treasures, so easily dug up, pocketed by navvies and quarrymen. Nothing is more likely than that these penny-a-liners would be the first to throw down their pens and dig out a better maintenance for themselves at the point of the pickaxe.

We do not venture these remarks in our own defence, for we were none of those who took out licenses to try our fortune at the diggings; but we do so in justice to those gentlemen who left their settled occupations at the first announcement, and have since continued profitably employed at this exciting pursuit; not only without injury to their reputation, but who, by their presence on the ground, have exercised considerable influence over the conduct of the refractory members of the community who were attracted to the first diggings at Summerhill Creek and on the banks of the Turon River. Altogether, the conduct of the colonists, during the complete revolution which this discovery made in their social relations with one another, and their political relations with the government, was very praiseworthy. Notwithstanding the accounts transmitted from some localities of the increase of crime which prevailed, our impression is, that so important a revolution in the interests of a community could not have been more peaceably effected, and compliance with the laws better maintained, than that which has been recorded of the inhabitants of the much-slandered colony of New South Wales, after the discovery of her golden resources.

The immense amount of gold which had been brought down from the Turon River, and other localities in the Bathurst mountains, and the interest attached to them as the first auriferous deposits worked in Australia, determined us upon paying a visit to that region. Therefore, shortly after our arrival in Sydney, we were among the thousands who were travelling on the Bathurst road for these now-celebrated diggings. On referring to the map, it will be seen that our route lay in a westerly direction

from that city, the road being regularly macadamised the greater part of the way; but as there is a shorter route to the Turon than through the town of Bathurst, we would caution the stranger gold-seeker upon his arrival in Sydney to be careful in his inquiries as to the cheapest and best mode of conveyance to these mines, which still rank amongst the most productive in the colony.

The Turon River is situated in the county of Roxburgh; it rises near Cullenbullen, and running through the county, divides it from Wellington county, and then flows into the Macquarie River. The auriferous workings at the "Golden Point" on the Turon are about 140 miles from Sydney by the Mudgee road, but by Bathurst they are distant 160 miles. "There seems to be three distinct geological formations between Sydney and these gold-fields. The sandstone formation, upon which that city is built, extending from the sea-coast to the western base of Mount Victoria, which includes all the level or undulating lands terminated by Emu plains and the range of hills called the Blue Mountains. It does not require a very close examination of the gorges and precipices which the traveller meets with on crossing these mountains to remove the surprise expressed by many who have never passed Parramatta, at the want of energy of the early colonists in allowing them so long to form the boundary of the colony; for although comparatively unimportant in altitude, their peculiarly long ranges of mural precipices, contorted and folded back on one another, present more formidable barriers, and are more difficult to penetrate, than many mountain-chains far superior in elevation. Ascending the hill, traces of intrusive granite veins appear, which are beautifully developed in the cuttings of the grand pass of Mount Victoria. A region of granite succeeds as you approach Hartley, alternating with the sandstone at first, and then entirely replacing it. The plains round Bathurst are composed of the *débris* of this rock, intermixed occasionally with quartz pebbles, the auriferous qualities of which are strongly asserted by many, although they do not appear to have been tested as yet. Next comes the region of schists, quartz, and metals, with which the New South Wales public have been so rapidly familiarised; the mi-

neral wealth of which would doubtless be deemed enormous, even in the absence of the great and overwhelming attraction, the gold. The character of these ranges differs entirely from that of the Blue Mountain Pass; precipices are not common in these localities, although they are to be met with on the bends of the rivers, and in the deep rocky gullies by which the mountains are cloven." We copy this graphic and scientific description of the country through which our journey now lies from a local newspaper, which will serve to give the reader some idea of its geological formation; and illustrate, at the same time, the intelligent jottings to be found in a gold-digger's note-book.

Before starting from Sydney for the Turon, we made some addition, in the shape of warm clothing, to our equipment; and we would recommend others to do the same, especially a double supply of blankets; as they are necessary during the cold nights, which occur even in the summer months in that high region. The road, for three-fourths of the way, is cut through the oldest settled parts of Australia; consequently the traveller can journey to the very threshold of these gold-fields in much the same manner that the people of England travelled before the introduction of railways. There is a good turnpike-road all the way to Bathurst, 113 miles; and you can reach it in a stage-coach, reminding you of the palmy days of the whip and four-in-hand. The first stage of fifteen miles, between Sydney and Parramatta, presents all these features of "the road" in perfection, and cannot fail to warm the heart of the traveller who has recollections of the same in his native land. After passing Ireland's inn, opposite the Liverpool-road, described by us on our way to Sydney, the road becomes pleasantly sheltered by trees; which are again broken at intervals by open spaces affording picturesque views of the surrounding country. And as the main branch of the estuary of Port Jackson, known as the Parramatta River, lies parallel with the road, you obtain two or three charming glimpses of the scenery on its banks. The distance from Sydney to Parramatta, by water, is eighteen miles; and there are steamboats plying to and fro several times in the day.

Arrived at Parramatta, you are much surprised at the

extent of the town, considering the small importance it holds in the commercial affairs of the colony. The principal street is upwards of a mile long; and there are said to be between 800 and 900 houses in the town, one-half of them well built of stone and brick, besides many public buildings, consisting of a government-house, a handsome court-house, an observatory, military barracks, churches, &c. &c., all suggesting the existence of a flourishing and well-disciplined town. On inquiry, however, you find that two-thirds of the houses are but scantily tenanted, the barracks are empty, the observatory shut up, and the other public institutions almost deserted; and that this has been the case for many years prior to the gold-discovery. The fact is, that this town mainly owed its existence to the establishment of an extensive factory for the punishment of female prisoners, during the period when it was a penal settlement. Since the cessation of transportation it has gradually declined, not having either agricultural or mercantile resources of sufficient amount to keep the population employed, who had formerly depended upon the government expenditure. Excepting a large steam flour-mill, and one or two manufactories of tweed cloths from colonial wool, there is not much going on to revive the trade of the place; and it is too near Sydney to form a depôt for furnishing the settlers in the interior with supplies, the traffic passing *through* it to the great emporium at the seaport. Hence the only class of people who seem to be doing a good business are the innkeepers; and they are reaping a rich harvest during these golden times, for this is the first town of any great size you meet with after leaving Bathurst on the way to Sydney. Of course, as all over the colony, those persons who still were in the place could think and talk of nothing else but gold, and speculate as to its effect upon their town, every new arrival from the gold-fields occasioning a change of opinion.

Here the governor has his country-seat, a building sufficiently large for his suite; and from the retirement of the spot, and other advantages, he makes it his residence for several months in the year. It is also a great resort for the Sydney people, who form pleasure-parties to the gardens belonging to the comfortable inns which it possesses.

Above the point of navigation, the stream dwindles into a rocky water-course, where there is scarcely any current during the greater part of the year: over it is built a substantial stone bridge. Upon the north side of the river is an establishment for the education and maintenance of female orphans, which is very creditable to the colony; besides which, there are several other charitable institutions.

The Bathurst road proceeds along the southern side of the town, where the land rises gently, affording a view of the surrounding country. On your left stands Prospect-hill, from the summit of which we were told a most extensive view is obtained; and around it are several cultivated fields belonging to the estate of Mr. Lawson. Although the traffic on the road here is very considerable, and it is liable to be greatly cut up by drays and carts laden with merchandise for the diggings, still it is in better condition than the Parramatta road, from being naturally well drained. The country all along this stage of the road to the village of Penrith, eighteen miles from Parramatta, is very pleasing, with the usual alternations of forest-land and clearings, where you see the residences of the oldest settlers in the colony. The soil appears light, and not very productive, if we may judge by the scanty crops which grow thereon.

The village of Penrith consists merely of one long street, built on the roadside: it contains about 300 inbitants, when the male portion are all at home; but as that has now become a matter of uncertainty since the gold-discovery, it seldom musters more than two-thirds of that number, and these are the women and children. At this stage of your journey you come to the Nepean River, which forms the upper portion of the Hawkesbury, a stream formerly of great importance to the colonists before they had penetrated beyond the Blue Mountains; on its banks were the principal agricultural farms; but from the devastating effects of the floods to which it is liable, most of the settlers were obliged to leave it. You cross the river at this place in a punt, from which you obtain a delightful view up and down its banks; and landing on the opposite shore, the road leads you through another

embryo town named Emu. This is the commencement of your up-hill journey; therefore we would advise you to start fresh, both man and beast. After ascending the hills which form the western bank of the river, you cross Emu plains, a table-land at a considerable elevation above the level of the sea. At Twenty-mile Hollow there is a sensible difference in the temperature of the air from that which you feel before reaching the Nepean; and if you are not accustomed to bivouac at night in the open air, we would advise you to push on to the "Weather-board Hut," where you will find tolerably good accommodation. Skirting the base of the Blue Mountains, and ascending Mount Victoria, until you come to the famous Victoria Pass, the road has been cut through the solid rocks, and presents in many places the surprising efforts of such a young community to overcome the deficiencies of nature. It is well known, however, that this work has been accomplished by prison-labour in the early settlement of the colony.

It will be supposed by the intelligent reader that the traveller, during the ascent of the Blue Mountains, does not experience much of that monotony which we have stated is the prevailing character of the scenery throughout Australia, for there are views of stupendous grandeur among their mountain glens that will awaken the dullest imagination. And should these prove ineffectual in rousing the attention of the gold-seeker, there is enough in the unusual exertion and anxiety required in toiling up the steep ascents to give life to the road, which sometimes presents novelties fraught with danger on the journey, especially if the traveller has the management of any vehicle. From the continual stoppages occasioned by casualties amongst the wearied men and animals at this rugged part of the road, you meet with more people than at any other stage, particularly after you have scaled these stupendous natural walls and begin to descend on the western flank of the mountains, which are of easy and gradual descent. Here we passed crowds of people on horseback and on foot, driving carts and wagons of every description; and one persevering fellow we saw actually with a wheelbarrow, who had surmounted all the obstacles in his way over Mount Victoria.

Scarcely have you left that wild region of desolation behind, when you traverse a valley through which the road winds, in every way a perfect contrast to it. This is the Vale of Clywd, the most beautiful valley in New South Wales, a perfect gem in the lap of these mountains, situated at the base of Mount York, and watered by Cox's River, an eastern stream which flows into the Wollondilly. That portion of it, however, which has called forth our praise is not more than six miles long in an easterly and westerly direction, through which runs a small stream called the River Lett, on which stands the town of Hartley. This valley was named the Vale of Clywd by Governor Macquarie in 1815, in consequence of the strong resemblance it bears to the vale of that name in North Wales. Hartley stands in a most delightful part of this valley, and is altogether a very romantic-looking village, in a situation that would bear comparison with some of those charming spots which the traveller finds among the Swiss Alps, or any other wildly mountainous country. At present it cannot boast of many inhabitants, nor are its streets easily defined, but it is increasing steadily; and should the fortunate gold-diggers become wearied of their rough life, here is the spot for them to settle down upon, and turn their plethora of gold into the healthy channel of agricultural pursuits. It possesses several remarkably clean and comfortable inns, and the houses are well built; which may be said also of many others scattered throughout the valley. Passing through Hartley, which is seventy-eight miles from Sydney, you come to another rising village, named Bowenfels, about seven miles from Haines's inn.

At Bowenfels the road separates, the main branch to the left being the Bathurst road, and the tract on your right being the Mudgee road,—the shortest route to the Turon. Along the latter road we pursued our journey. The first improvements we came to on the way were those of a Mr. Brown, who has erected flour-mills in this locality, worked by water brought from some considerable distance, having availed himself skilfully of his situation. He has an excellent house, with good out-offices, and much land enclosed and under cultivation; altogether a very pretty

place, surrounded by the mountains. Continuing onward, we arrived at the Middle River; close to which is the "Welcome inn," about twenty miles from Hartley—a very tolerable house of accommodation, no doubt, in quiet times; but we found it a very noisy place to expect any rest in,—so after our day's journey of forty miles we bivouacked at a convenient spot, and rested comfortably for the night under the open canopy of the heavens.

Very early in the morning we were *en route* for Keening's public-house, the next place of accommodation on the way. Our road lay through some fine open valleys, with here and there extensive alluvial flats, upon which there were settlers located, and improvements in building going forward. This discovery of gold has been the means of bringing these high lands into cultivation, where they would otherwise have remained untilled for ages. Within about four miles of Keening's, on the left side of the road, there is a comfortable residence belonging to a gentleman of the name of Cadell, whom we met afterwards at the inn, when he very obligingly invited us to his house on our return. After a journey of nineteen miles from the Middle River you arrive at Keening's public-house, situated very near to some rugged mountains, called Crown Ridge. All about this place is very pretty; and should the golden prospects of the district be realised, it may become a township of some importance, and prove of great value to its proprietor, Mr. Cadell.

From Keening's to the Turon River over the mountains was said to be nine and a half miles; and to the first water, at Bandanora Creek, eight miles. As the latter route was the shortest of the two, and as it would give us an opportunity of seeing the upper part of the Turon, we determined upon taking it, though the country, we were informed, was very mountainous and difficult to travel over. However, with the assistance of a man going the same way,—in spite of his being rather drunk, but whom we were told by Mr. Cadell we could depend on,—we passed over, and were rewarded for our trouble, the scenery being in many places beautiful and grand. The insurmountable obstacles, of which we had heard so much before starting, as is frequently the case, vanished as we approached them;

and our inebriated guide was just one of those spirits who take things as they come, with good humour,—so we got over the ground cheerfully together. The land in this high district, which no doubt is severely cold in winter, is much better covered with grass than we could have supposed,—better, in fact, than any we had seen in the low country between it and Sydney, except on the banks of rivers. As breeding-runs for cattle these mountain districts must prove highly valuable. Making the Bandanora Creek, we rode down its banks for a mile and a half or so, and came upon the Turon River, which at this spot is but a small stream. We then followed its course for about eight miles, crossing and recrossing its bed several times, until we came to a spot, shortly after sun-down, where we found plenty of grass and water; and there we halted and made ourselves comfortable for the night after the bush fashion.

As usual, we were early astir and journeying towards the diggings, some fourteen miles lower down. Riding along for a few miles, we passed many parties at work upon what is called the Upper Turon, all of whom had been more or less successful in finding gold. At Arthur's sheep-station they increased in number, until multitudes appeared busily at work upon the right bank of the river, as we traced its course downwards, which the diggers have appropriately named "Golden Point." The scene was very striking, and the busy hum and rattle which resounded through the valley was animating in the extreme. The men whom we spoke to were civil and communicative, though with a certain reserve. There were great differences in their statements as to their success; some had been fortunate, others the reverse; but all were of opinion that there were inexhaustible supplies of gold on the banks of the river. We selected for our bivouac a spot on the opposite side to the Golden Point, about a mile below it, and some three or four hundred yards back from the river, near the road which passes over the hills to Bathurst. From this position we commanded a view up and down the river for a considerable distance; and most singular was the scene, particularly after night had set in, when the fires of each party blazed in myriads from the bed of the creek up to the summit of the hills. We were

reminded of the wild and tumultuous encampment of an irregular army in a mountainous country, which we had seen in our younger days; and the firing of guns and pistols from time to time by some of the parties during the night, with the bandit appearance of the different groups at their fires, added to the idea.

As we leaned our head that night on our saddle for a pillow, we could not help ruminating upon the probable result of all this rushing to and fro of multitudes in search of the coveted metal. The masses of gold found on the banks of this river, and other auriferous deposits, no longer permit the most incredulous even to doubt but that gold and other valuable metals exist in this territory to an amount it is impossible to calculate. The ministers of state who regulate the affairs of our colonial empire have here a new question for their deliberation in council. For the first time in the annals of our ancient kingdom the Sovereign possesses full power and dominion over a gold region. Not a mere nominal territory of the kind such as history makes mention of among the Scottish, Welsh, and Irish hills; but a vast region promising a yield of the pure metal far exceeding in quantity any thing which has been heard of in the gold-mines of Russia, Mexico, or even California. Hence they have no historical experience to guide them in protecting the interests of the state under such circumstances, or in ascertaining the probable effects this discovery will have upon the political bearing of the colonists, or the influence which a large body of foreign immigrants may have over the minds of the people. We have met with demagogues in the colony, even a reverend demagogue, who did not except the Sabbath-day for the promulgation of his pernicious doctrines, to proclaim Australian independence. We trust, however, that there will be found too much loyalty to our noble empire in the hearts of the colonists for them to take the course so broadly suggested by these demagogues,—the enemies to its unity. They may rest assured that these men are ignorant of the power of their country, as they are presumptuous in supposing that a mere handful of people could successfully revolt against it, to the ruin of themselves and their dupes, without any just cause whatever. Such grievances

as there may be, real or supposed, should be fully inquired into, with the determination to do all that is right.

In the morning we mingled amongst the diggers, and saw them in full work with their cradles at Golden Point. One party of six men had for their morning's work upwards of three ounces. At this part of the river many were doing much better than that, while some were doing less, and others whom we spoke to had not procured any. From the general success, however, which every one sooner or later met with, there is no question whatever as to gold not only being found in the bed of the creek and at Golden Point, but in the mountains around. That which we saw in the cradles was washed out of earth dug many feet deep in the bank, and which had probably been below the action of water for ages. And as the earth brought from the very tops of the hills for miles back from the river contained gold, there seems to be every reason to conclude, that the general opinion of the Turon diggings being inexhaustible will be fully borne out.

To obtain the gold at this locality, however, there seems to be more labour required than at the other spots we had visited. The quantity of earth which has been moved in the bed of the river, and the excavations on the hill-sides, must be seen to be credited. They are a proof not only of what man can and will do for gold, but also of the great energy and physical strength of the population. At Oakey Creek, a tributary of the Turon, their labours must have been prodigious, judging from the rocks of enormous size which had been moved by sheer bodily strength. The number of people at work upon this river and its tributary creeks, it would be difficult for us to estimate correctly, for the thousands we saw at work were being added to every hour by fresh arrivals; and then, again, others would be seen flying away like mad people whenever they heard that a fresh deposit had been discovered somewhere else, fearing that they should be too late in choosing their claims. Talk of slavery and prison-labour, indeed! no class of human beings working under the punishment of the lash ever laboured as these men do. It matters not what position they held in society before, all are alike, gentle and simple, one universal passion absorbs all their thoughts—the lust for gold;

and for this they will work and toil under the blazing sun, and beneath the pouring rain, heedless of the inclemency of the weather. What leading-articles should we not have in the columns of our best public instructors, if men were compelled to labour and to suffer as these people do voluntarily! No language would be too strong to use against the government that was so atrocious as to sanction the treatment of people in a manner such as these diggers voluntarily submit to. We have seen road-gangs labouring in chains, and we have seen slaves toiling under the lash; and we do not hesitate to say that their labours were easy compared to that of the great majority of successful Australian gold-seekers. But then they are free!—that magic word, which sweetens the heaviest toils; the motives they labour for, all men understand,—the desire and the hope of independence. And we are free to confess, as we have before stated, that had we been in a position to have acted as we pleased, we should have remained amongst them, and risked our fortune with theirs.

The good conduct of the people at this locality, as well as the others we subsequently visited, was beyond all praise; to the colony most creditable; and an answer in some degree to those who seem to take a delight in saying uncivil, not to say untrue things of the masses working at this occupation. It is also an answer to those who abuse Britain, and attribute rottenness to her institutions; and when we remember the accounts transmitted to us of the doings in California, and the lawless state which even now prevails amongst society there, we cannot but feel a pride in the respectability and morality of the population of this British settlement, under circumstances equally exciting and hostile to law and order, as those which ushered in the discovery of gold there. When put in contrast with the motley population and the system of brigandage which appears to rule the people there, the colonists of New South Wales can safely throw back in their teeth the vile imputations the press of California has made against their character, and by the calm and orderly bearing they have maintained shew an example for them to follow; and we believe that the crimes which have occurred on their shores, and attributed to Sydney people, will be found in many cases

to have been committed by their own citizens. But it must be remembered that in our high estimation of the character of the Australian gold-diggers, we speak of a population strictly British and colonial, not having been subject as yet to the influence of visitors from California, or from the disappointed desperadoes who may perhaps congregate here, and do their best to aid in creating mischief; otherwise we may leave an impression upon the reader's mind that order may always continue.

While we were at Keening's public-house, we heard a report of a man having been murdered at the Turon by a fellow-labourer driving a pickaxe into his skull, in a fight about the possession of a hole. After careful inquiries this report was found to be a pure invention; probably by some evil-minded person, to whom the good conduct of the people became an annoyance; or perhaps it may have proceeded from that strange habit some persons have of *inventing* news, for the sake of the little importance which attaches to them for the time being. We are sorry to find that some English journals seize upon these rumours with avidity, and publish them with unfavourable comments upon the people of New South Wales.

The Turon River, like many others in Australia, is liable to sudden floods, from which already there have been some losses in life and property among the diggers; and it will require every precaution on their part to guard against them in future. At the commencement of the diggings here, which were among the first in the country, the great mass of people who flocked thither were townspeople, who, comparatively speaking, knew very little about the country, or the exigencies of a bush life; hence they encountered privations, and met with accidents, which any experienced bushman could have avoided. Here, however, the excess of water proves as injurious to the gold-seeker, as in other localities its absence is felt to be the greatest drawback; and there is as much discomfort to contend with in soaking tents and damp blankets during the winter, on the banks of the Turon, as in eating dusty food and going with unwashed bodies during the summer at Mount Alexander. Verily the gold-digger's life is a hard life, and the labourer is worthy of his earnings.

CHAPTER XVI.

BATHURST AND THE OPHIR GOLD-FIELDS.

Bathurst plains—Town of Bathurst—Court of Assize at Bathurst—Character of the old settlers—Their feelings of loyalty—Road to Ophir—The Ophir diggings—Summerhill Creek and the surrounding country—An industrious settler and his home—Township of Orange—Frederick's Valley—Gold found in ironstone—Town of Carcoar—Cross Belubula Creek—Coombing, the estate of Mr. Icely—Mr. Rotheray's station—Indications of mineral wealth—Death of an old shepherd—King's plains—Fitzroy Hotel—Return to Bathurst—Mrs. Wentworth—Want of servants.

LEAVING the Turon River and its busy population to their gold-burrowings, we struck across the country in a south-west direction, making for the town of Bathurst, distant thirty-five miles. It is a good day's journey on horseback over the rough mountain-track you have to traverse. The country you pass through is generally very indifferent; the only patches of good soil that appear on the way are in the valleys near the homesteads belonging to Mr. Suttor and others, who are some of the oldest settlers in this district. The sheep at these establishments looked tolerably well, considering that the grasses in those high lands have not the fattening properties possessed by the grasses at lower altitudes. As you approach Bathurst the character of the country changes very suddenly, and you pass through an extensive plain, which presents a striking contrast to the mountain scenery you have left, having rather a desolate appearance, from being destitute of trees. "This transalpine country was considered inaccessible until 1813. It consists in general of broken table-land; in some places forming extensive downs, without a tree, such as Bathurst Plains, which include 50,000 acres. Occasional open downs of this description extend along the banks of the Mac-

quarie River for full 120 miles. They are not unlike the Brighton Downs of England; but with this remarkable peculiarity, that on the summits of some of the elevations or knolls there are found dangerous quagmires or bogs, resembling sometimes a pond that has been dried up, but at other times concealed by a rich verdure." Such is a general description of the country around Bathurst, given by Mr. Wells in his excellent Geographical Dictionary of Australia, which, although possessing many unavoidable errors, is a creditable book to be got up in so young a literary community as Australia.

The town of Bathurst, so well known to the world since these gold-discoveries, is situated in the middle of the plains we have just alluded to, on the banks of the Macquarie, 113 miles from Sydney. Even before the memorable year 1851, it was considered to be the largest inland town in the colony, and contained nearly 400 good houses, mostly of brick and stone, with several neat churches, a court-house, and many capital hotels, with a population of about 2000. But now, as it is the centre of the richest gold region in New South Wales, there is every probability of its rivalling the cities on the coast in prosperity and increase of population. At the present time, if we take into consideration the number of inhabitants for several miles around, we are not far out in saying that Bathurst and its environs has a population of between 6 and 7000; and as the county of which it is the chief town is famous for good agricultural land, the time is not far distant when the riches of its golden grain will equal in value that of its auriferous deposits.

Among other tokens of its advanced state, it has for many years possessed a weekly newspaper, called the *Bathurst Free Press*, a very creditable periodical. In its columns we were informed that during the week of our arrival in town the assizes would be held; we were glad of this, for it gave us an opportunity of seeing those who may be called the gentry and substantial men of the county. Certainly a more respectable-looking class of people no country could desire to possess; and as far as we could learn, the circumstances and character of the gentlemen assembled upon that occasion were not inferior

to our landed English gentry. Many persons may be surprised at reading this, and think that we are using exaggerated comparisons; they possibly having no other idea than the old exploded one, that all the inhabitants of New South Wales, or at least a very great portion of them, have been either convicts or descended from them. We are not among those who think that an error, or, if the reader pleases, a crime, when once atoned for, should never be forgiven; for we have known many of these unfortunate people, who, in a crowded state of society and under adverse fortune, had been betrayed into crime, and others even whom we considered reckless men, who had paid the penalty of their crimes, afterwards become honourable and useful members of society. The squatters, however, and the great body of the people in this colony possessing property, and thousands of those not possessing property, are as free, and perhaps far more honest, and certainly, from our experience, we can safely say they are more just and generous, than those persons who take a pleasure in speaking disparagingly of them; and when we have heard people indulge themselves in this way, we have always endeavoured to remove error and prejudice from their minds, and checked the tongue of scandal when it indiscriminately brands one and all with the epithet of "Botany-Bay felons." Those convict pioneers who assisted in clearing the wilderness have become lost in the army of free colonists. They no longer compose the bulk of the labouring population; and the influence of the more wealthy and better-educated "emancipists" sides with order and good government. Any one who would go there and judge for himself will find these people composed almost solely of free and independent British subjects, whose self-expatriation has not altered their honest bearing or moral well-being. To infer otherwise is not only a libel upon ourselves, but a disparagement of our common national morality. There they live in every-day communion with each other, much as we are accustomed to do, and are equally desirous of instilling into the minds of their children those precepts of rectitude and virtue which they have carefully carried with them intact from the land of their fathers; and society there is a living evidence of the fact, that "the Anglo-Saxon

reproduces his country wherever he hoists his country's flag."

The higher class of settlers in New South Wales, however, are too proud a body to condescend to defend themselves; and they are too busy laying the foundation of the future nation to find time or opportunity to publish to the reading public in the mother country the responsible position they hold in the social scale among their fellow-subjects of the British empire. It is only travellers like ourselves—idlers by the way—who, having experienced their hospitality, and seen their acknowledged worth and integrity, from a sense of duty, lay these facts and statements illustrative of their social condition before their fellow-countrymen. We may further remark, that men do not often forgive, and rarely forget, an attack upon their characters; and the stupid, untrue, and mischievous statements we have seen and heard concerning the settlers of Australia generally, by some factious men, who desire to stir up contention between the colonists and the parent country, are far from being expressions of their opinions. There is a deep feeling of loyalty to our noble empire amongst them; and if any other feeling arises, it will be owing, not to our countrymen there, but to ourselves, and to our incapacity to create an empire of all the communities of Englishmen throughout the world, forming one vast people in the terms of *general union* and *public league*, but *private* and *domestic independence*. We ventured to indulge in such a dream some years ago; but we fear apprehension of evil will refuse what we conceive to be the only remedy, and bring about the results most dreaded. History tells us that it has always been thus; rulers refuse so long to be just, that when they give way it is often too late.

From Bathurst to the Ophir gold-fields is full thirty-five miles. In a few miles after leaving that town and its open plains, you enter a rugged, wild, mountainous country, with towering granite and quartz rocks on the way. Occasionally, however, you come upon some tolerably good flats, covered with pasturage; but generally speaking the feed is poor and scanty, and the land apparently much overstocked. It rained very heavily during our journey, and night approaching as we traversed a

country which became wilder and wilder, we stopped at a spot where there was a little grass for our horses, and made the best of it for the night. Our animals were very tired and hungry, and the scanty feed they got did them but little good; so next morning we pushed on at an early hour, in hopes of obtaining some provender at Ophir. On approaching the river, and before we commenced descending the hills—which rise steeply, and in some places perpendicularly from its bed—we came upon a store; the first thing we inquired for was some corn for our poor horses; the answer was, that the minister had that morning asked for some, and he was told that there was only enough of corn for the postman. Thus our poor animals suffered severely, as there was no grass around, and it was wretchedly wet and cold.

These diggings at Ophir are supposed still to be very rich; but at the time of our visit there were not more than a hundred men at work: first, the water had been, and was still, very high; and secondly, they had been drawn away from them by the superior attractions offered at the Turon and elsewhere. At this particular spot there has not been found as yet evidences of gold in the uplands; and, from the rocky character of the locality, it would appear that the workings cannot be carried on without great labour. Unless, therefore, they find the gold alluvium as readily as at the Turon and other diggings, the men for the present will desert them. During our stay at Ophir, some twenty-four hours, it was a storm of rain and wind the whole time; and we received shelter from some kind people during that time, for which we felt very grateful.

We left Ophir for Summerhill Creek diggings, and passed through a better description of country, where there were some good homesteads. As it was necessary that our horses should have something to eat, we stopped at a sheep-station belonging to Mr. Richard Lane, a gentleman possessing considerable property in this part of the country. Here there was plenty of grass; and we rested ourselves in the shepherd's hut while our horses picked up a little feed. The shepherd was an old sailor, and was full of anecdotes about the gold-discovery. He told us

that about three years before gold had been found hereabouts by a man of the name of Michael Magrath, which he sold to a settler for *2l.*, who resold it in Sydney for *13l.* This, and many similar stories current in the neighbourhood of Bathurst, makes Mr. Hargreaves' successful discovery and survey of these gold regions the more meritorious, as he was the man who openly gave the gold-fields of Australia a local habitation and a name; while others had neither the enterprise nor the intelligence to follow up their knowledge, founded upon a more tangible basis than his. We proceeded on our journey; and about five miles from Ophir, on the Summerhill Creek, at a point below Castle-hill, we saw not more than two hundred men at work; and generally they were doing well.

The whole of the surrounding country appears very good for sheep, cattle, or cultivation. We passed an enclosure in which a man was ploughing, which caused us to stop and ask him how it was that he did not do as all the people in the colony appeared to be doing, viz. abandoning agricultural industry for gold? His reply was, "Gentlemen, it is a matter of speculation; wheat against gold; and my corn-fields, I think, will prove to me the better of the two: people must eat, and if I am not mistaken, I shall make more by my ploughing the fields, than in the long-run I should by digging for gold; and not run the same chances of injuring my health, from being exposed to such a rough mode of living. However, perhaps I may take a turn for a few weeks at the pick and cradle; but I will not neglect my fields." This was a wise man; and it is to be hoped that many small farmers will follow the same sensible course. It is clear that unless the fields are attended to, there will, in all probability, be a famine in the land.

The rain came down in torrents as we pursued our journey, and we gladly accepted the hospitality of a small stockholder, who kindly offered us shelter for the night; and such accommodation was given as his small cabin offered. We were in a terrible mess with mud and wet, and enjoyed the dry hearth of this humble abode, in preference to proceeding onwards to Mr. Lane's homestead, some little distance off the road. Our host was a hard-headed, rough fellow of about fifty-eight years of age; he

had been in the country upwards of forty years. During our stay under his roof, we saw much that was praiseworthy in this man. He told us he was a native of Norfolk county; and came from the same village as Nelson, of which he was justly proud. He had married an Irish emigrant woman; and his children, six in number, it was very pleasing to see about him. He had brought them up in a way that would do credit to any Christian land; and, though his wife is a Roman Catholic, his children are of the Church of England. He had been an industrious man evidently; for he possessed many hundred head of cattle, and otherwise appeared very well to do. Altogether we were surprised to find, under such a rough exterior, such truly Christian feelings as seemed to direct his conduct and opinions. He expressed regret that a clergyman did not come more frequently from Bathurst to visit his neighbourhood. He did not do this in a complaining spirit, but simply regretted the fact; saying that it was one of the evils of a young country, that spiritual instruction was so far from the labouring man; that the clergy were very active and most attentive, and the hardships they had to undergo in the performance of their duties would scarcely be credited by their brethren in England. He mentioned, with great satisfaction, that he had not heard of any clergyman from either the Churches of England or Rome going to work at the diggings, though some "preachers" had not scrupled to do so; and that some Methodists and others, who exclaimed against doing any work on Sunday, had made an exception in favour of gold. In the morning we bade our host good bye, and thanked him for his hospitality.

Near this honest fellow's abode is the township of Orange, a place which may increase rapidly as the gold-discoveries progress. Coming towards Blackman's swamp we passed by Mr. John Lane's, and also Mr. Templeton's, of Summerhill, both pleasant places, and about which there appeared to be much good land. Mr. Templeton, we were informed, had dug gold out of his garden. He has a good corn-mill, worked by steam; and all about his house, premises, and gardens, shewed the wealthy man.

From this place we turned our horses' heads in the

direction of Carcoar, distant from Orange a fair day's journey, in such bad roads and heavy rain as we encountered. We first came to Frederick's Valley, the property of Mr. Wentworth, which was attracting much attention as a gold deposit; but there were few men there, in consequence of the cold and wet. The value attached to certain places in the valley by its proprietor may be imagined from the sum of 30,000*l.* being demanded for fifteen acres of land, of course supposed to be very rich in gold. A specimen of auriferous ore was obtained from this locality by Mr. Hargreaves, stated in the *Bathurst Free Press* to "consist of ferruginous rock, beautifully dotted with globules of gold." The specimen was found amongst a quantity of earth with which the Wellington road at Summerhill had been repaired. Indeed, a portion of the road had been torn up by the neighbours, who appeared to think it a reckless waste of wealth to repair the roads with gold! A very large specimen was exhibited in Sydney shortly afterwards, from the same quarter, of a similar description. The Rev. W. B. Clarke, one of the government geologists, in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, alludes to this unusual matrix for gold in the following terms: "The occurrence of gold in ironstone has also been exhibited in Mr. Wentworth's estate; but I believe that that ironstone is merely quartz cemented by ferruginous matter, and not, as at Turner's of Bungonia, a compact argillaceous iron ore." Since then a company has been formed to work this auriferous ore on a large scale, and there is every likelihood of their making it a profitable undertaking.

When within five or six miles of Carcoar we stopped at a roadside inn, which was as much like a place of the sort in the Weald of Sussex as it is possible to imagine; all about it was clean and comfortable in appearance. We were not wrong in our surmises, for we found the landlord a native of that county; and from this circumstance were greatly tempted to stop, particularly as it was pouring with rain and getting dark. We were too anxious, however, to reach Coombing, the estate of Mr. Icely, ten miles beyond Carcoar; and mine host informed us, unless we crossed the Belubula Creek at Carcoar that night, we might be prevented the following day, for the waters were rising rapidly.

We arrived at Carcoar as it became quite dark, and still raining heavily. The creek had already risen considerably, but it was still possible to cross it with safety; and as there was no corn in the village for our horses, we determined at once, and forded the stream without much difficulty. On the opposite side of the creek we found a blacksmith's forge, but still no provender for our hungry animals; therefore, after having a shoe put on one of them, we proceeded in the direction of Coombing, notwithstanding the attempt of the kind blacksmith and his wife to dissuade us; for the road, they said, was intricate, especially to strangers, and the night so dark and stormy that there was every probability of our missing the way, and that if we did, a night in the forest would be our lot. However, as the reader will have concluded by this time, we are no strangers to bush-travelling; and so, receiving the best directions the smith could give us, we groped our way through the woods. We were fortunate in arriving soon and safely at our destination; but unfortunate in finding that Mr. Icely was from home. To this gentleman we not only had a letter of introduction from a mutual friend in Sydney, but one from England; yet so awkwardly were we situated, that if the night had been fine, and there was any place near to retreat to, we should have withdrawn. As it was, our letters were sent in to the ladies, when we were admitted, and shewn into the dining-room, where some refreshment was placed before us, of which we partook. Afterwards, we requested the servant to say that we should feel honoured if permitted to pay our respects to the ladies, when Miss Icely, a most charming girl, appeared, evidently under some alarm. We excused, as well as we could, our intrusion, and she seemed to be a little easier, saying, on withdrawing, she hoped the housekeeper would make us comfortable. We could not but regret the absence of the father, which prevented us joining the family circle.

Although Coombing is 155 miles from Sydney, the traveller would be surprised to find the elegances and comforts which surround Mr. Icely at this spot. The residence is commodious and spacious, built in the cottage style, and situated on a knoll in the bosom of the hills, on the banks of Coombing Creek, with a beautiful, well-culti-

vated, and well-arranged fruit and flower garden around it. His manager has a house three or four hundred yards from the residence, on the left hand as you approach it, near to which is a higher knoll, and farther away are the stables and other out-offices. The whole premises are surrounded by large enclosures of cultivated, and otherwise reclaimed ground, into which you enter from the road through a large white gate. Altogether it is a pretty place, and quite the residence of a country gentleman.

Being anxious to push on towards the Lachlan, we left early, though it was raining heavily and the creeks much swollen. Traversing an excellent open forest-country, here and there crowned by ridges of hills, we arrived at Mr. Rotheray's, about sixteen miles from Coombing, situated on a rising ground above Limestone Creek, a tributary of the Lachlan. His residence commands a fine view of Mount Canobolas and the adjacent range, distant some forty miles in a north-west direction. Mr. Rotheray, some time a member of Lincoln's Inn, has a most comfortable dwelling here; and he is surrounded by an amiable wife and a family of eight children. His boys, although they are young, are becoming useful to him in these times, when labour is so scarce. All boys in Australia residing in the country ride well; and they are soon capable of superintending sheep and cattle. Really it is difficult to say what would be the result now in many cases if it was not for them. In old countries it is a matter of very serious consideration to know how to educate and find employment for boys; whereas in a country like Australia, particularly at the present time, it may be truly said, happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.

There is much cleared land about this residence, and large grazing paddocks, which were looking beautifully green when we saw them; but we were informed that the country suffered periodically from droughts, although Limestone Creek, during the driest and most distressing years, was never known to fail. As we have elsewhere remarked, the devastating effects upon sheep and cattle from a deficiency, or from the absence of this useful element, renders sheep-farming and cattle-grazing a precarious investment in some districts; and those alone know

the value of water who have suffered from its scarcity in this country, where death often sweeps away the squatter's flocks and herds, and brings ruin upon him. From the name of this creek it will be supposed that limestone is found on this property; besides this useful mineral, the surrounding country exhibits quartz veins among the rocks, and indications, it is said, of copper: from all which there is little doubt but that it will turn out a rich mineral district.

During our short stay we found Mr. Rotheray in close attendance upon a poor old man, one of his shepherds, who had been taken ill at one of his distant sheep-stations. The poor fellow's time was come. All had been done for him that kindness and experience suggested, and the skill in medicine which all persons possess in new countries from being thrown upon their own resources; but in vain. Had he lived a few hours longer, medical aid would have been at hand; not that any benefit could have accrued to the patient in this case; but such is always the custom, even in those distant regions, when it is at all practicable. On our return to Bathurst we took a letter from Mr. Rotheray to the police-magistrate at Carcoar relative to the case, as it is necessary to register all deaths in the colony, as in England.

Passing through Carcoar on our way back to Bathurst we had an opportunity of seeing that township by daylight. It is situated in a valley, surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, with the Belubula stream running through it, which at times is of considerable size. It is 144 miles from Sydney, and has some very good houses in it, with a neat church just newly built. Altogether it is a very pretty place; and if this gold-discovery does not draw away its male population from their industrial pursuits, there is every probability of its growing into a considerable village. Ten miles from Carcoar you come to a capital roadside inn—"the Fitzroy Hotel," named after his excellency the governor, Sir Charles Fitzroy. It is a substantial brick building, affording good accommodation to the traveller, and situated on King's Plains, in the county, and 21 miles from the town of Bathurst. These plains are broad and of considerable length, and composed of

rich agricultural soil, if we may judge from the abundance of wheat and other descriptions of grain produced upon them. There are more small paddocks under cultivation here than are generally seen in the same space upon these high lands. Here, as at other places of a like kind, the men had left their corn-fields for the gold-fields, which are not many miles from their neighbourhood: there are greater chances, however, of their returning to reap their harvest at such a spot than at others more distant and less fertile.

After crossing King's Plains, journeying eastward, the road passes over an indifferent hilly country, until you come upon the border of Bathurst Plains; but even these are thinly grassed, although they feed an immense number of sheep. Within about six miles of the town of Bathurst, on this road, there is a very good inn, called the Marlborough Arms, where you meet with civility and attention,—matters of importance to the traveller in these independent times, when "Jack is as good as his master."

Returned to Bathurst, we resolved upon resting for a day or two before we started on our tour again, not so much for our own benefit as that of our poor horses. In passing through the town we met with an old friend in the person of the police-magistrate, Major Wentworth, formerly of the 62d Regiment, and brother to the member for Sydney. Having been recently appointed to this office, he was residing in a temporary abode about two miles from town. We accompanied him thither to pay our respects to his most agreeable lady. We found her occupying a small cottage, and attending to her household duties without any servants to assist her. No doubt this necessity entailed great inconvenience upon our friends; but Mrs. Wentworth, like many English ladies under similar circumstances, made the best of it. Whatever may be the ultimate benefit of this discovery to the community, it is difficult to determine; in the meantime, families who have been suddenly deprived of all attendance find it vastly unpleasant. At the same time, it is surprising to see how little the industrious lady feels the want; and we have even heard the servants themselves express their surprise how well gentlefolks could do without them. The

fact is, that very frequently servants are a great pest; and consequently, in many instances, we should have nothing to do with them beyond actual necessity, only for appearance sake, and that we may be in the fashion with our neighbours. When once, however, the fashion takes a turn the other way, as it seems to be doing in Australia at the present time, we may expect to see the laughable travesties of *Punch* realised at the antipodes, and the rising generation of ladies there studying the practice of the washing-tub at school instead of the piano, and receiving their friends in the kitchen instead of the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOUISA-CREEK DIGGINGS.

Presumptuous diggers—Aristocratic diggers—An inhospitable settler—Life on the road to Louisa Creek—Bivouac—Mr. Suttor's sheep-stations—The realities of a gold-digger's life—Nugget-hill near Louisa Creek—A wet and cheerless encampment—The town of Mudgee—Barnaby's inn—Mr. Cadell's station of Ben Bullen—A mountain home—Mr. Walker of Wallerawang—Waterfall on the Blue Mountains—Return to Sydney.

Among the groups of gold-diggers who came into Bathurst from the diggings far and near, we could distinguish men from all classes of society, notwithstanding the uniform coarseness of their garb; and it was amusing to listen to their opinions on the geological formation of the gold in the earth, some being convinced that it grew like potatoes. One day we heard an Aberdeen doctor discoursing very learnedly, as he considered, upon the subject, using some long technical terms to back his arguments, shewing that it was the easiest thing in the world to know where the auriferous deposits were, and expressing his surprise that people should find any difficulty in obtaining the precious metal. He was affecting so much superiority over others, that a person present was tempted to ask him how it happened, with all his extraordinary knowledge, that he had been going over the ground for so many years, and all the time blind to the existence of these treasures, which he now asserted were so clear? The learned gentleman was not well pleased at this interrogatory; he seemed puzzled, and prudently held his tongue. It stopped him for the time; but no doubt he would assume again his superiority on the first occasion which offered. As a general rule, we may fairly conclude, that where there is great presumption, there is great ignorance; so, on such occasions, we

preferred the opinions of the practical working man to the crude theories of those who passed themselves off as great lights in science.

To complete our tour through the gold regions of Australia, we prepared ourselves to encounter the rough journey before us to the Louisa Creek, the Meroo Creek, and the World's-end diggings. This latter name was very appropriate under the circumstances in which we started; for after visiting such a distant locality, it was time for us to return from our wanderings. These were the latest discovered diggings at the time we were in Bathurst; they are situated about seventy-five miles in a northerly direction from that town, and the nearest way to them is by passing through the Turon diggings, thirty-five miles on the road. While sauntering among the diggers at this latter place, we met a son of the late Sir Richard S—r, a midshipman on board one of her Majesty's ships at Sydney, in company with a brother-in-law of a member of Parliament. They were in digging costume, and appeared to be looking about with the intention of entering into the speculation in a business-like way. Whether they possessed the strength and perseverance necessary to insure success is a doubtful question; however, there they were, determined to take their chance with the others in the golden scramble. During the few days we had been absent from this river, many hundreds had gone to Louisa Creek, where, it was reported, there were much richer gold-fields. We resolved, therefore, notwithstanding the badness of the weather, to visit that locality on the following day.

We started, although it was pouring with rain, proposing to ourselves to stop for the night about two miles along the road at the station of Mr. Richards, who, we were informed, did not object to receive strangers. Upon our arrival there, we however found ourselves misinformed on this head; for Mr. Richards entertained no such idea. He would not suffer us even to take shelter in a hovel; we therefore had no other alternative but to proceed in spite of the fury of the elements. Thanks to our oilskin cloaks and leather overalls, we were able to keep ourselves comparatively dry. It is not usual in New South Wales to be refused the hospitality of a settler's station; but the

multitudes passing to and fro fatigued and alarmed this person, who, though he was coining money by selling his sheep at high prices for food to the diggers, yet affected to be annoyed that his retirement in the mountains should be invaded. These parties should adopt a custom followed in some parts of America, where strangers pay a certain well-known established charge for the night. No doubt Mr. Richards felt that pressure and necessity for the time being which compelled him to say "No," except to those individuals with whom he was acquainted, or who had come upon business which interested him.

We turned from his door with a cheerless feeling, and pursued our way for eleven long and weary miles, over hills and through valleys, along the worst of roads, while it rained in torrents all the way. We were far from being the only party out in this wild region without shelter in such a dirty night; and, as usual, it made us more contented with our lot. We met and passed hundreds of people journeying along to the all-attractive gold-fields: men, women, and children, all were thoroughly drenched. Some were in wagons and drays, others on foot and on horseback; many of the former were stuck in the mud, and some broken down altogether. Here parties were unloading, and taking only one-half of the load up the hills at a time, when they would return for the other half, patiently and contentedly. There were other parties in search of cattle that had strayed from their bivouac; whilst some were seeking their horses, which they suspected had been *borrowed!* Night setting in just as we met two gentlemen in a similar predicament with ourselves, we resolved to bivouac together, before it was too dark to select a proper place. These gentlemen had come from beyond Maitland; each of them led a horse, and they said they were in advance of their party some days, who were coming on with wagons of provisions. The night was stormy; but nevertheless we made it out pretty well.

On the following morning we proceeded to Warragunya, about three miles farther on, a station belonging to Mr. Suttor, and situated on Crudine Creek—a tributary of the Turon—which is joined here by Cunningham's River. The storekeeper at this station is a native of Nottingham-

shire; he was one of those men who were compelled to leave France during the Revolution of 1848, and whom the British Government assisted to emigrate to this favoured land. His wife, a native of France, though born of English parents, is a most interesting woman. They are, indeed, a contented couple; and it was quite refreshing to hear them speak in grateful terms of the considerations extended to them by their country. A son of theirs, a smart boy, accompanied us on the road towards Pyramul, another station of Mr. Suttor's, which lay on our road. By the road it is sixteen miles in a circuitous route round the base of the mountain-ranges between the two stations; whereas it is not more than eight miles by a bush-track across them, as the crow flies. We, having the advantage of the boy for a couple of miles to put us in sight of a certain high mountain, as a guide to our path, preferred taking the shorter route of the two. The mountain proved to be of steep ascent, attaining a great altitude above the surrounding country. However, we surmounted it without any great difficulty, the directions to follow being clearly given; so we arrived safely and in good time at Pyramul. The view from the summit was very grand and extensive; we could see Crown ridge near Keening's, twenty miles off, and other high and distant mountains. We proceeded on our journey very slowly, occasionally leading our horses up the steep ascent, and stopping to pick up specimens of the rocks; amongst these we were successful in finding a few tolerably good ones, with gold in them. There is no doubt as to the whole of this region being more or less rich in gold-quartz veins and auriferous alluvium. The shepherds on this "run" are always on the look-out for the precious metal in their daily rambles, and not one of them but had gold in his possession. They spoke of their employer, Mr. Suttor, with great respect; they called him a fair man to labouring people; which in these times is a character of great value for a master who wishes to retain his men.

As we approached Pyramul, we were surprised to see a flock of sheep under the care of a young woman, the first shepherdess we had met upon our travels. Her father, she told us, had gone to Louisa Creek with some neigh-

bours, and left her in charge of the flock. They had been very successful, getting some days as much as seven ounces among four of them. It was well for this young woman that the natives had been subdued in this locality, otherwise they would have made sad havoc amongst her flock. Our road, as we neared our destination, lay over high and rugged mountains, and often through those dense thickets termed "scrubs" by the colonists; neither of which, nor the prospect before us, was at all encouraging; for it appeared to us almost a certainty when we arrived that we should not be able to procure any thing to eat, nor find accommodation of any sort to protect either ourselves or horses from the inclemency of the weather. Regular gold-diggers, of course, provide against such contingencies; we took our chance. The heavy rains had made the road almost impassable for drays; and we met many returning to the Turon in a bad plight. The unloading and reloading, which is necessary to get these drays over the stony parts of the road, and drag them out of the mire, are some of the disagreeable realities which do away with the romance of the occupation to the intending gold-digger, even before he reaches the enchanted spot. Hence many a townsman, unused to the exigencies of a bush life, becomes sick of this attractive pursuit upon the threshold of the gold-field. Wet, cold, tired to death, with no other prospect before him but heavy labourer's work, which he is not equal to, he begins to doubt whether he has not been making a mistake in giving up a certainty, amidst the comforts of a town life, for this uncertainty in the houseless wilderness. Then perhaps he meets a number of unsuccessful men going back to town, ragged, penniless, and probably ill; which increases the length of his face, and he feels an inclination to return with them. But other parties, who have been successful, coming up, he listens to their flattering tales—of their good luck—how they and a great many more have made their fortunes. This raises his spirits, and he is once more all hope; so he proceeds on his way cheerfully, and enters upon his labours with vigour. If fortune does not favour him, he either hires himself to others to obtain a living, or he falls back upon the labour offered by the settler to earn a little money to-

speculate again. Or should he have had enough of a gold-digging life, and return to seek his former occupation, he is fortunate if he escapes from his toils as sound a man in health as when he entered upon the tempting speculation, and finds as profitable employment on his return to town as that which he gave up when he left.

For several miles before you reach Louisa Creek the country becomes tolerably level; and as you approach this famous locality from the south, the first object which attracts your attention is the quartz lode from whence the enormous mass of one hundred and six pounds weight of gold was obtained. This giant vein of mineral quartz crops out from the midst of an alluvial flat to a considerable height, and forms a striking feature in the landscape. Louisa Creek is about half a mile below this Nugget-hill, as it is termed. The water-course near the hummock is called Dirt-hole Creek, which has yielded a large proportion of the gold from this locality. The weather was very unfavourable for work during the short time we remained at Louisa Creek. Gold, however, was being obtained by some parties in considerable quantities. There may have been two hundred persons on the ground; few of them were working with cradles. A number were breaking the quartz on Nugget-hill, which was strewed about like rock broken for a macadamised road; and a few were carrying the gold-earth on their backs to the water to wash it in the stream, which repaid them very well. During all this time the rain fell in torrents, and every one was thoroughly drenched; and, as it happened, those who were ill-provided with tents were not much more exposed to the wet than the possessors of the best, for it was impossible that any one could have lain down that night in a dry blanket. Having excellent prospecting hammers with us, we tried our luck as experimentalists among those who were breaking the rock at "Nugget-hill," and in less than an hour we had the fortune to find a good specimen with the gold intersecting it.* Most assuredly had we at that time been free from the

* Since we visited this spot, a company has been formed, buildings erected, and works in full operation for the purpose of reducing the quartz by machinery, and extracting the gold by chemical means. A correspondent of the *Maitland Mercury* gives the following interesting account of his visit to the scene of operations:

commands of duty, we should have entered into the speculation. On the same ridge, and very near to the spot where the large mass was found, another piece of gold-quartz, we were informed, had been dug up, weighing twenty-seven pounds and a quarter. It was described as consisting nearly of one-half gold and one-half quartz; the latter of a beautiful white colour, interspersed profusely with the gold of the purest quality; and having all the appearance of being forcibly squeezed together when in a fused state, so as to cause the gold to protrude on all sides.

The Louisa Creek, the Meroo Creek, and the World's-end diggings are within a few miles of each other, and about twenty miles from the town of Mudgee, situated in the county of Wellington, on the Cudgegong River, one

"Such a day as this not being pleasant to work in, we spent the afternoon in a visit to the quartz-crushing machine belonging to the 'Big Nugget Company,' which has been for some time at work. This machine, which goes by steam, is at once simple in its contrivances and complex in its results, and appears to be as perfect in design as it is neat in workmanship. It is of colonial manufacture—a circumstance which, coupled with the golden purpose that it promises so efficiently to serve, swelled my heart with as much of the pride of country as in brighter weather the clear Italian skies of our own Australia are wont to do. As to the profits of the concern since this giant of skill and power has been employed for the company, of course I had no means of learning; but judging from some of the lumps of quartz spangled with gold which I saw ready to be placed under the pestle of the machine, I should be inclined to augur favourably. This quartz, of which a considerable quantity was heaped up in the spare corners of the apartment, had previously been reduced by manual labour to small fragments of from four inches diameter downwards. In this state it is thrown into a square iron hopper, in which a ponderous pestle descends upon it perpendicularly, with astonishing rapidity and force. When comminuted sufficiently by this part of the process, the stuff finds its way, by a simple and effective contrivance, into a circular compartment, about eighteen feet in circumference, within which two immense iron rollers revolve, something like our planet the earth—to compare the products of human skill with the grander scale of Nature—one revolution of each being on its own axis, whilst each more slowly describes the circuit of the compartment. The rollers, if you will allow me the expression, appear to have different *orbits*, so that nearly the whole area of the compartment is subjected to their crushing march; whilst, accompanying their wider revolution, skimmers of sheet-iron project forward at an angle outwardly and inwardly, and, just brushing the surface, scrape every thing within the pathway of the wheels with a precision that almost seems instinct with intelligence and life. The pounded quartz is then as fine as flour, which it much resembles. You may judge of its fineness when I assure you that the impalpable dust produced by the operation powders the heads of the workmen like millers. This accumulating heap of quartz-flour, however, is made to relieve itself of any superfluity by falling in proper time and state into a kind of cistern, through the centre of which a wheel with a strap studded at inter-

hundred and fifty miles from Sydney. The Meroo Creek is a tributary of this river, which has upon its banks some of the richest and most beautiful meadows in the district. Mudgee is on the south side of the river, and is admirably situated for a thriving population. Nature has done every thing for this place; and as it is situated, like Braidwood, near to rich gold-fields, there is every likelihood of its soon becoming a large town. The rich agricultural lands by which it is surrounded will furnish employment and food for a large population; and its position among the mountains—which are not too near it—renders it one of the healthiest inland towns in the colony. It is in truth a most picturesque, and altogether a beautiful locality.

Having seen all that was novel and worth observing in these gold-fields, we retraced our steps. On our way back we noticed that the country is poorly grassed for horses and sheep in the winter season, although at other times there is

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vals with small tin buckets moves simultaneously with another wheel about twelve feet over-head, around which the bucket-studded strap before mentioned also turns, bringing the buckets up full out of the cistern, and discharging their contents into a proper receptacle in its downward course for more. The stuff is then conveyed of itself into a quicksilver amalgamating apparatus, which is supplied with water by the same motive power. This apparatus is very complicated in appearance, having a multiplicity of small cylinders which spread along the surface of the tray containing the watering mixture, and dip to their axles into it. Each of the cylinders is lined horizontally on the outside with an infinity of small blade-like cogs, and with these they play into each other with wonderful celerity and harmony, impelled by a corresponding series of small cog-wheels stretching along the outside of the tray and attached to the axles of the cylinders. A lively commotion, as you may suppose, is thus kept up in the paste-like stream during its transit through the tray. It then passes into another tray, which has a number of stops forming separate compartments. In this tray there is no motion beyond that produced by an inclination of about five degrees in the tail of the tray, over which the refuse stream passes so sluggishly that it seems, in fancy's eye, to be conscious of having been robbed of its treasures.

I have thus attempted to convey to such of your readers as may not have witnessed quartz-crushing operations, some faint idea of the admirable process. I was much gratified by the inspection, and grateful to the officers of the company for the ready permission to examine every thing which they favoured us with. I should have wished to pry more particularly into all the minutiæ of the concern; but one does not like to risk being troublesome, or to appear too inquisitive. Although admiration is the first emotion one must experience and express on taking a survey of what this genuine, bonâ-fide quartz-crushing company has already done, another, yet a kindred feeling, in which every honest heart and candid mind, after such a sight, must participate, will prompt the earnest wish—that prosperity may attend the Big Nugget Quartz-crushing Company; and, *advance, Australia!*"

said to be very good feed; and we may observe that these uplands are well covered with timber. We rode rapidly past the stations of Pyramul and Warragunya, and we reached, late at night, a third sheep-station of Mr. Suttor's, called Redbanks. From here, in a few miles, we came into the Mudgee road; and then, after passing Cherry-tree Hill, between the Turon River and Colo Creek, we arrived at Barnaby's inn. The proprietor of this roadside hostelry has established himself in rather an extensive valley amongst these mountain-ranges; and he is just the man to make the most of these golden times. He will soon be out of his little roadside inn into a much larger one, in which he will be able to accommodate the thousands who now pass his house on their way to the Turon. He has also a considerable breadth of land under cultivation, and he is enclosing more. His proximity to the gold-fields will enable him, it is probable, to hire as much labour as he requires among those who have not been successful; and his greatest gains will be from those who are fortunate. From this spot to Keening's is several miles, the road passing over the high mountain we have already mentioned, called Crown Ridge; the view from which is very wild and picturesque, particularly towards the ranges where the rocks are of a mural character.

Passing through Mr. Cadell's property in the vicinity of Keening's inn, we availed ourselves of his hospitable invitation on our way up to call upon him at Ben Bullen on our return, where we were most politely received by him and his lady. Ben Bullen is a pretty spot, and there is every probability of its becoming a valuable property. There is a good deal of land about it under cultivatien; and as the hungry diggers accumulate at the neighbouring gold-fields, there will be great inducement to break up more. We accompanied Mr. Cadell on a tour of inspection to that part of his sheep-run on the banks of the Turon where there were a number of diggers at work, and found about a hundred men busily employed, who were all more or less successful in finding gold; but a great many had left in consequence of the flood in the river. Mr. Cadell found that one party had coolly taken possession of a shepherd's hut, from which he was obliged to eject them; at the same

time the men were civil enough, and hoped that no mischief had been done; however, it proved the necessity of proprietors of stations in the vicinity of the gold-fields looking sharp after their property. On our way to this part of the run we rode through a rough country, where a tributary creek of the Turon passes between high and precipitous banks; but on our return by a different route, we saw some exceedingly good open forest-land covered with abundance of grass, and fit either for sheep or cattle; this grass however, like most of the upland grasses, does not possess those fattening properties so valuable to the grazier on the lowlands. On this land excellent limestone has been found, and some of it which we saw was beautifully grained, like dark marble, suitable for chimney-pieces and ornamental slabs. Not far from the house also are several limestone caves, which, in the bush-ranging days of the colony, were the hiding-places of a band of daring villains, known by the name of "Jewboy's Gang." The rocks of which those caves are formed shew remarkable imprints on them, as if they were impressions of human arms and hands, which no doubt the geologist could trace to those extinct races of animals whose organic remains have lately been discovered. Epsom-salts have been found here also in a natural state; in fact, every day brings to light the hidden mineral resources of this most interesting country.

Leaving our kind host and hostess to their golden prospects at Ben Bullen, we passed on to Wallerawang, the estate of James Walker, Esq. To this gentleman we had a letter of introduction, and therefore felt rather disappointed to learn that he was absent at Hartley, fifteen miles distant, attending to his duties as a magistrate at the court of petty sessions. However, we sent in our letter to those of the family who were at home, and at once we were received in that cordial manner which distinguishes so many of the gentry of Australia, and which, as we have the pleasure of acknowledging, is often extended to individuals who trespass as strangers upon their hospitality. Here we met some ladies and gentlemen from Bathurst, and sat down to a comfortable family dinner. We were joined by a neighbouring settler, who came in dressed in complete bush-costume, blue shirt, belt, and cabbage-tree

hat, all complete, as he had just returned from a "prospecting" tour among the mountains. Some men shew their dignity of bearing under the rudest garb, but we should never have taken him for a gentleman dressed in the digger's costume.

After dinner Mr. Walker returned, and we had the satisfaction of receiving from him a most hearty welcome. He was apparently much fatigued; and not being a young man, his duties of attending as a magistrate at the petty sessions, so far from his residence, he begins to feel press heavily upon him. He is one of the largest and most successful sheep-owners in the country: his flocks and herds, however, are principally on the Castlereagh River, two hundred miles north from his mountain home at Wallerawang. He is a most intelligent and pleasant gentleman; one who has seen much of the world, and in early life had served his country in the American war as an officer in the marine artillery. In our conversations upon the unprecedented state of affairs in the colony, he entered into all the topics which were of general interest with great earnestness; and it was agreeable to meet with one so fully able to cope with the questions it gave rise to, and so hopeful in his arguments for the progress of Australia. To us it was particularly so, as that progress, in his view, was not in opposition to British connexion, but in harmony with it. In the evening we were still further gratified with our call at this delightful mansion by hearing the ladies discourse sweet music; and we retired to rest more comfortably than we had done for many nights previously.

On the following day Mr. Campbell, the gentleman from Bathurst, with his wife and daughter, departed in their carriage. Mr. Walker having kindly insisted on our remaining, shewed us the improvements, or rather we might say the property, he had made in this highland valley. The house is of considerable size, and built in the cottage style, with the most convenient arrangements. It is situated on a rising ground in the splendid valley of Wallerawang, which is about three miles wide, and situated in the county of Cook, on the road to Bathurst, 95 miles from Sydney, at the head of Cox's River; the surrounding country is mountainous and romantic. There are some well-enclosed

paddocks of excellent soil on the broad flat lands around the house under cultivation; and the hills afford ample pasture-grounds for a sheep-run. The air is delightful, but cold, and like all other parts of this elevated region, is subject to summer frosts, which do mischief sometimes by cutting off the young crops. The premises include one of the finest shearing-sheds, with a wool-press, which we remember to have seen. The garden is formed in terraces on the side of the hill where the house is built, and possesses every sort of European fruit-tree, with flowers of the most familiar kind, and many rare exotics. This fruit and flower garden is connected with a kitchen-garden on the opposite side of the stream by a neat bridge thrown across it. A dam has also been constructed in the bed of the river, which insures a good supply of water in the driest seasons. Some persons might object to the situation in which Mr. Walker has built his house, but this we were not inclined to find fault with; for when we considered what sort of place it must have been in a state of nature, we confess that we were so full of admiration at the result of that gentleman's labours, and seeing the improvements he had made, that we had no other feeling than one of unmixed satisfaction, and we fully enjoyed the beauty of all around us.

Once more upon the road we pursued our journey back to Sydney, passing again through the romantic and beautiful Vale of Clywd, with its pleasantly situated townships of Bowenfels and Hartley. The great traffic on the road during the wet weather, which had continued for some time, rendered it almost impassable in some places; consequently the carriage of merchandise from Sydney to Bathurst had reached a most exorbitant sum. On our way down, the only place we visited worthy of notice which we have not yet described, is a famous waterfall on the Blue Mountains, situated off the road about two miles and a half from the "Weatherboard Hut" inn. Remaining for the night at this place of accommodation, we rose at daylight next morning, and followed the course of a small stream from this spot leading to the fall. When we reached a convenient position, so as to have a glimpse of this mountain cataract, we were rather disappointed at the small

volume of water it displayed, scarcely sufficient in our estimation to be considered a waterfall. However, the insignificance of the stream was amply compensated for in grandeur by the tremendous precipice over which it fell, not less, we should suppose, than a thousand feet in height. This precipice forms part of the perpendicular cliffs which enclose an apparently inaccessible valley, appearing like a yawning gulf in the bosom of the mountains, which rise in magnificent grandeur around it. To look over this precipice on the gloomy vale below makes one feel dizzy, and you shrink back with a feeling of terror; even the brilliancy of an Australian sun can scarcely light up the dark shadows which envelope it. Altogether it is one of the wildest and finest mountain scenes it has been our fortune ever to have seen, and stands in striking contrast to the monotonous aspect of Australian scenery generally. We were informed that no one had yet descended into the valley; of which assertion we are rather doubtful, when we consider the adventurous character of the bushmen of the country: no doubt it would be folly, if not dangerous, to attempt it alone, as it might occupy several days in accomplishing. The bush-rangers in the early times of the colony lived in places equally difficult of access. One of these may be seen after passing the Blue Mountain inn, near to the toll-gate, where the cave of a noted bush-ranger named King may be seen. This man committed many robberies on the road, and for a long time eluded the police; but his retreat was at length discovered, and he was shot at the entrance of the cave.

Our wearied horses were glad to traverse the level lands on the east side of this mountain region; and we gave them a long rest and plenty of provender on our return to Sydney.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE GOLD-DISCOVERY.

Importance of the discovery—First indications—Wonderful results—Character of the gold-bearing rocks—Extent of the gold region—Matrix of gold—Its distribution by water—Dry diggings—Richness of the gold deposits generally—How can the working of the gold-fields be best regulated?—The government of Victoria in a difficulty—They rescind their orders—Memorandum on the gold-question submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria—The Government, as trustees for the public, can claim a royalty—Increased charges for the protection of the colony—Gold exempt from the rules which govern other commodities—The principles of our memorandum fair and just to all—How the gold-revenue should be expended—Subjects of the empire alone should be privileged to dig—Such regulations would prevent desertion—An annual license conducive to the health of the miners—An abundant circulating medium created throughout the British empire by these gold-discoveries.

Not only the fact of the great discovery of gold in Australia took the world by surprise, but as that discovery will act upon all interests throughout every nation, in consequence of a greater circulating medium being created, men are feverish as to the probable consequences of a gift by a bounteous Providence to counteract the errors of man. Perhaps, therefore, it may not be uninteresting to many, if we say a little relative thereto.

Gold had been found by shepherds, and others in a similar condition of life, in various districts of New South Wales from time to time; and Sir Roderick Murchison, it appears, specially called the attention of the Government of New South Wales, some years since, to the fact that the geological formation of the Main Range, or Australian cordillera, strongly resembled that of the Ural Mountains, and therefore recommended a search for gold and the other metals which are found in the latter range. Notwith-

standing, however, these indications, the world, as we have stated, heard with astonishment of the discovery; and it is astounded at the vast quantities embodied in that land; and it will concede to Mr. Hargreaves the merit of possessing that practical common sense in prosecuting his successful researches, which, in all time, when it has a fair field, will prove itself advantageous to mankind.

This discovery has brought together large masses of people; and it will attract multitudes from the United Kingdom, and other countries, to that portion of our empire. It is now a matter of history that immense amounts of gold have already been procured; and as every arrival brings intelligence of new discoveries, some of which are of a richness far exceeding any hitherto known, even those of California, there can now be no doubt that this gold exists in the extensive regions of Australia to an amount it is impossible for us to estimate. It may therefore not be uninteresting to many persons to have the opportunity of forming their own opinions upon a matter of this kind, and to a certain extent upon the character of the population, by giving some further information connected with this most interesting discovery; a discovery which it is our hope may be so used as to be of great advantage to the colonies, and a rich inheritance to the British people throughout the world.

We have already given details of various localities; we shall now, therefore, confine ourselves to general remarks, submitting such views as we think necessary for the occasion.

The formation or substratum in the localities in which gold is found differs greatly: sometimes, as at Araluen Creek, it is all granite gold; unlike that of the Turon and Ophir, which is associated chiefly with schistose* and quartzose† rocks; the granite, however, being throughout of trappean‡ character. Then, again, at Frederick Valley, it will be remembered, specimens were obtained by

* Schistose, having a slaty structure.

† Quartzose, containing quartz as a principal ingredient.

‡ Trap is a dark-greenish or brownish-black rock, heavy and tough. It is an intimate mixture of felspar and hornblende. It is often called greenstone.

Mr. Hargreaves of auriferous ore consisting of ferruginous rock, beautifully dotted with globules of gold, &c.

The regions wherein gold is found extend from Wide Bay, in lat. 26° S. to Port Philip, a distance of at least 800 miles, with a width varying from 50 to 200 miles. Further discoveries may, and probably will, increase the area to an extent it would be bold indeed to limit. Throughout the whole of this tract there are numerous streams and water-courses, which have their sources in mountain-ranges running parallel to the eastern coast; and also in high lands, distinct and distant from those mountains, gold is found in vast quantities. These streams are the sources of rivers which have cut their channels through the ranges; some of them flowing to the west, and swelling the water of the Murray to a mighty stream; others, again, flowing to the east, forming the Shoalhaven River and other streams. The gold-bearing quartz does not cover in any locality the entire face of the country. In some parts there is scarcely any; but most frequently it intersects the rocks in large veins in various directions. It is also found in masses and small fragments on the surface, and seen along the ravines and in the mountains overhanging the river in the hill-side in its original beds. It crops out again in the valleys and on the tops of the hills, and forms a striking feature of the entire country over which it extends.

How this gold has been produced it is hard to say; it is a question upon which men have, and will ever differ. That it is found in enormous quantities, and in various localities, and in different combinations, is a fact. Nevertheless an idea has been expressed, which we think deserves attention,—that whether in detached particles, in nuggets, or in veins, gold has been generated in quartz, as it is the most extensive matrix producing it. The localities in which it is found shew that it occurs on the surface within a few inches, and many feet below it; presenting in the former case the appearance of having been detached from the matrix, thrown up and scattered in all directions by some great agency.

The rivers, in forming their channels, or breaking their way through the hills, have come in collision with

the quartz containing the gold veins; and by constant attrition have abraded the decomposed part of the quartz, or gravel, from the gold, whether in nuggets or flakes, or in dust, taking away the rubbish reduced to mud, leaving the heavy metal at the bottom. Likewise, in some of those places where the velocity and strength of the water in a flood was great, some gold may have been, and probably was, hurried down the streams, through narrow ravines and gullies, with the rubbish, and distributed over banks, where a wider margin is found on each side; over which the water rushes now, during the wet seasons, with great force: the same process, no doubt, has been going on for ages.

If so heavy a metal as gold has been swept down the streams into the beds of the larger rivers, they must be very rich. As the velocity of some of the creeks is greater than others, so is the gold found in fine or coarse particles, apparently corresponding to the degree of attrition to which it has been exposed. The water from the hills and upper valleys, in finding its way to the rivers, has cut deep ravines; and whenever it came in contact with the quartz, trappean, or granite matrix, it has dissolved or crumbled them, and left the particles of gold free. In the dry season these channels are generally without water, even in holes; and during the wet seasons they do not always run. Gold is found in the beds and on the margin of many of them in large quantities, but in a much coarser state than on the banks of rivers; owing, we conceive, to the comparatively moderate flow and temporary continuance of the water, which reduced it to a smooth surface, not unlike pebbles; but the stream evidently had not sufficient force to reduce it to flakes or dust. On this point, however, as on every other, people differ; and the fact of finding finer gold in the rivers is stated as a proof that it has been washed down from the higher lands.

The dry diggings are those places where quartz containing gold has cropped out on the surface, and been disintegrated, crumbled to fragments of pebbles and dust, by the action of water, the atmosphere, or some other cause. The gold has been left, as it was originally formed, in all imaginable shapes, in pieces of all sizes, from one grain to

several pounds weight. The evidences of its formation in quartz as its matrix are very numerous; perhaps, as in granite, every sort of quartz may not possess the property of such production. We have seen pieces of gold free from quartz or any impurity; but these must have been detached by some means from the quartz matrix. In many specimens the particles of gold are so minute, that they cannot be separated from the quartz without pulverising the whole, and then subjecting it to the action of quicksilver. These dry diggings in some places spread over valleys of great width, and on the sides and also summits of the hills. The latter occurs to a greater extent at Mount Alexander and Friar's Creek than at any of the other gold-fields; though we saw many places which, from the external appearance, promised to be equally rich.

It is most probable that the gold in the dry diggings, and that in the beds of the rivers and creeks, is at great depths: the former in lumps, or coarse, the latter generally in dust, or finer, have one common origin. That which is found in the rivers has undoubtedly been worn from the veins in the rocks or other substances with which gold was mixed, and with which the strong and constantly running streams have come in contact for ages. Almost all the gold-fields are sufficiently rich to pay for working, and some of them to a degree that is most startling; to attempt, therefore, to form an opinion of the probable amount of treasure in these gold regions would be vain: we are of opinion that its development is only beginning.

To regulate this matter properly, so that the empire may be benefited by the discovery, will be a subject for very grave consideration; and most anxious must her Majesty's government be to adjust all interests, so as to secure the hearty goodwill of the mass of the people. The gold-diggers labour under an idea that the government are jealous of them; and when the governor and council of Victoria proposed to raise the license-fee from thirty shillings to three pounds a month, it is much easier to imagine than to describe the discontent that shewed itself. At Mount Alexander, indeed, the symptoms of insubordination were so great and so threatening that the government deemed it prudent to give way. The people have had it

suggested to them, that it is their right to work for gold; that to deprive them of that right would be a grievous wrong: without, however, entering into that question of right, practically the government, if it could, would have great difficulty in preventing the people from working. The gold-fields are not only too extensive, but a large portion of the auriferous soil is in private property; and it is to us very doubtful if government could enforce any regulations contrary to what the people considered fair. Troops have been suggested; but the employment of soldiers in such a service, otherwise than as protectors of the industry of the people, would not only be odious in their view, but ineffectual in enforcing unpopular regulations; they would be more likely to set an example of insubordination than to compel obedience in others. In New South Wales there are not wanting men ready to suggest violent steps; and separation from the mother country would be the cry. The entire freedom and independence of Australia is already publicly averred by some parties; any fake step, therefore, in this matter would consequently be seized upon with eagerness by those discontented men who have ulterior views.

Repeating, therefore, that no system which is not in accordance with the interests of the mass of the people can be carried into successful operation, it should be considered fortunate when laws can be so framed as to harmonise these interests with the policy and duty of the local government; and being of opinion that the case might be met, and seeing that the government of Victoria was in a difficulty,—as shewn by its rescinding its orders,—we ventured to submit the following memorandum on the question for the consideration of the lieutenant-governor while we were in Melbourne:

"1st, That an annual license should be issued by the government; which license to dig for gold should be good for nine months; and for which license a sum of one pound alone should be paid.

"2d, If any man should dig for gold any portion of the remaining three months necessary to secure the harvest and clip of wool, he should be charged for each month twelve pounds for the permission to dig.

"3d, The government should be the purchaser of the gold, for which it should give three sovereigns, or three pieces of gold, each of the value of a sovereign; or six pieces of the value of a half-sovereign each; or twelve pieces of the value of a quarter-sovereign each; and some five-sovereign pieces might be issued. It is true that the right to coin is in the Crown; but to meet the necessity of the case, in the absence of any precedent, you should go back to first principles.

"4th, The tokens, or pieces of gold, to be a legal tender, and received by the government in discharge of taxes and in all transactions in the colony, until the question is finally settled.

"5th, Private persons buying gold to be liable to seizure, unless they pay ten per cent on the amount to government.

"Such a system would benefit not only the gold-diggers, but every class in the community, as it would, by adding to the circulating medium, benefit all and every class, and so help industry in all its various ramifications, whether in town or country; whereas the present system will not only be disadvantageous to the gold-diggers, but it must injure all interests; and it places the government, which can alone have the interest of the community at heart, in a wrong position with the people; and every system would be prejudicial to the community which did not add to the circulating medium; for instance, an export-duty would do mischief.

"To the gold-diggers this system would be advantageous, because they would get fair value for their gold; whereas now some of these hard-working men have been compelled in their necessity to sell their gold for *2l.* 17*s.*, and many for *2l.* 10*s.* an ounce, and they will probably have to submit to much lower prices.

"To the merchant and to those engaged in trade it would be advantageous; because their interests would be attended to, and they would be able therefore to meet the increased demands upon their purses for labour.

"The present system, by decreasing or not adding to the circulating medium, must injure all those numerous classes not engaged in successful digging or immediately connected with the diggers.

"British subjects alone to possess the privilege of digging under such regulations."

Many persons properly jealous of the interference of the government in mercantile speculations may be opposed to the above; but if such individuals reflect a moment, they will see that there is no interference whatever proposed. It is said, that on gold being taken to the mint sovereigns are given for it at its value without any deduction whatever; and why, therefore, should a different rule be observed with regard to gold dug by individuals out of its natural bed upon British territory? Our answer is, that gold thus obtained belongs of right to the government—that is, to the public at large; that, therefore, a royalty, as it is termed, is due, or claimed by the government as trustees for that public: no one in New South Wales or Victoria that we ever heard disputed this. The question is, how to obtain this royalty: directly from the miners when working in small parties, impossible; indirectly we conceive possible, and in some way that would be of the greatest public advantage.

It is clear that extra disbursements must fall upon the colonial treasury by reason of this new development of the country's resources. Whence are the funds to be obtained for all the various increased charges of police and defence, internal and external? If not from the gold, they must come from the general revenue of the colony, or from England, for the maintenance of an increased force of soldiers, ships of war, &c.

This measure is more and more proper for government interference, from the circumstance that the banks in Australia have, it is said, determined not to advance any more of their funds upon gold operations. If this should be a permanent rule, the effect would be to throw the gold-diggers into the hands of the capitalists: these men must sell their gold to live; and it requires no great foresight to see, that though the measure would be of great service to monied speculators, yet that it would be most disadvantageous to the public generally. Gold is either merchandise, or it is not; it is either an exception to the principles which govern mercantile operations, or it is not. If it is merchandise, it should be treated as such in every respect, and

be entitled to advances from the banks as upon wool, tallow, or any other colonial produce. The bankers have no right to consider the effect; that is the province of, and duty of the government to the people at large. This very act of the banks appears to us a proof that gold, used as it is, is different from all other merchandise, and therefore not within the rules that govern mercantile operations. Consequently there would be no departure from principle in establishing the propositions submitted in our memorandum. We believe that some regulations based upon these principles would be received as a boon, and afford protection to the interests of the great body of the people; and if we are not mistaken, they would be not only found to work most advantageously for the miners, but all other interests, both local and general, would be greatly benefited by the possession of that which, according as it may be used, will be either a blessing or a curse to the people possessing it. From our own experience, we have observed, that while every British subject at the mines is aware he is upon government property, yet he would consider any attempt to drive him away as an act of oppression; but though this is his opinion, we have heard hundreds of them say, that something should be paid for the privilege of digging; and they would, therefore, willingly pay a reasonable sum for such privilege, and for protection in the exercise of it: and we believe that the government might calculate on the great mass supporting a system which would do justice to the community and empire at large.

The revenue collected in the manner alluded to from this source, we consider, would be greater than under the present system; the first charge upon which, after expenses of collection, should be for such police and military as might be necessary for order and security. Secondly, a suitable amount should be expended in the construction of roads and bridges, to facilitate communication to and through the mining districts. And the third item for the support of ministers of religion at the mines, and such objects as may be proper to attend to for the general good and protection of the gold-diggings.

Our reason for submitting that British subjects alone

should possess the privilege of digging under such regulations is, that these mines belong to, and in our judgment they should be preserved for the use and benefit of, the British people throughout our extended empire. If foreigners become citizens of the empire, their rights would commence. Such a principle acted upon would be understood by our people, and they would estimate it.

Under this system of a small annual license the labouring man would see that the government was not jealous of him working at this lucrative employment on his own account; whereas his view is, that a high license is intended to prevent him working at all. This system, therefore, would have their cordial support; and such support would be of infinite service to the government, in excluding from the mines all those not entitled to work, or to whom does not belong the right to be there from any other cause. This would check desertions among the military and men-of-war's men; sailors belonging to the mercantile marine would not receive the encouragement they now do to run away from their vessels as soon as they cast anchor in port; and which, if some measures to meet the probable difficulties that threaten to arise are not devised, will be disastrous to the commerce of the country.

We conceive that under such regulations many of the emigrants would remain and form a resident population; and that there would be thousands of young and middle-aged working-men from all parts of the empire continually resorting to the mines under such regulations, for the purpose of obtaining the means to establish themselves in some of the steadier pursuits in the colony; and it is probable, that as soon as they had secured a sufficient sum for this purpose, they would return from the mines, leaving room for others to go and do the same.

Independently of these considerations, an annual license, such as suggested, would prevent many sad results attending upon the monthly system of collection. Having nine months' privilege to dig for so moderate a sum, few men would risk their health to remain exposed to the inclemency of the season, whether from cold, rain, or heat, as they now do; and thus we think that a small annual license would be conducive to the health of the people.

Nothing would surprise us less than to hear of dreadful sufferings at the mines, occasioned in a great degree by the poor man continuing at his labours exposed to every hardship, after having paid for one monthly license, and not possessing means to pay for another without digging successfully for more gold. But independently of this consideration, we have very great doubts whether the small annual license would not produce as much revenue as the present monthly one, as it is more than probable that every man, woman, and lad would take it out; and the government, both as a purchaser of gold, and as the recipient of its royalty in the shape of ten per cent, would be in funds sufficient to meet all charges occasioned by the gold discovery, and thus be enabled to do its duty to the advantage of the public and to its own honour.

A mint upon the principle we have submitted would spread life and activity not only throughout the colonies, but extend its benefits to many other British interests. The present mode of sending the gold in mass to England will prevent to a certain extent the evil consequences attendant upon the money legislation of late parliaments; but the system here submitted, we presume, would not only have that effect, but it would further the prosperity of all British institutions at home and abroad, and be the means of developing some national interests but little considered in remote places, by reason of making the circulating medium throughout the British world abundant. It has been the absence of a circulating medium—which is the life of the body politic—in sufficient abundance to meet the wants of our extended empire, that has occasioned so much mischief of late years. These gold-discoveries have given to the world that which the wit of man failed to provide; and therefore, as we do not doubt but that the gold-mines are inexhaustible, we look forward hopefully.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DISTRICT OF ILLAWARRA.

Reports of the fertility and beauty of this district not exaggerated—Steamboat trip up the Parramatta River—Mr. Blaxland's salt-works—Estates on the Windsor road—The town of Windsor—Vineyards—Village of St. Mary's—Country between Penrith and Nareflan—Campbelltown—deserted homestead—The township of Appin—Jordan's Creek—The position of Illawarra—Remarkable change in the vegetation—View from Mount Keera—Lake Illawarra—The inn at Dapto—Township of Jamberoo—Minumurra Creek—Town and bay of Kiama—John Stapleton of Geringong—Coolangatta, the estate of Mr. Berry—View from the mountain—Extent of improvements upon this estate—The seaport town of Wollongong—Character of the inhabitants of the district—Return by steamboat to Sydney.

HAVING thus completed our tour through the gold-regions of this wonderful land, we shall now give some account of our travels in other portions of the colony, where the resources of the country, though not equal in point of commercial wealth to the gold-districts, still possess what is of vast importance to the rapidly-increasing community on these shores—a prolific soil, capable of raising food for the millions who, in the course of time, will populate the country. To be in New South Wales and not to visit the district of Illawarra would render incomplete our sketches of the agricultural lands of the colony; under any circumstances, therefore, we had determined to see that district. And having seen it, we consider—what is not common—that the reports relative to its fertility and picturesque beauty are not exaggerated. Our route from Sydney was, however, rather circuitous for ordinary travelling, nevertheless it took us through some interesting country; and although it rather wearied us in the accom-

plishment, we hope not to weary our readers, as we shall trot briskly over it.

The commencement of our journey was up the Parramatta River, leaving Darling Harbour in the *Emu* steamboat. It was a splendid morning when we started, and very warm. The boat was well filled with passengers; and a great number of people were assembled on the Phœnix wharf to see us start. The trip to Parramatta is a favourite excursion with the inhabitants of Sydney; consequently you frequently meet with pleasure-parties on board the steamboats plying between the two places. Soon after leaving Darling Harbour you pass Goat Island, —where the powder-magazine is built,—and Cockatoo Island—where the government are cutting a dry-dock, for the convenience of repairing ships. Passing the latter island you enter the Parramatta River; on either side of which, for several miles, you pass beautiful bays and rocky headlands, studded over with residences of all shapes and sizes, from the humble cottage to the mansion. As the steamboat proceeds, you see cultivated grounds and gardens on both banks of the river, and occasionally an orange-grove close to the water's edge on the north shore. On the left or south side of the river the stranger cannot but help noticing extensive salt-works erected on the bank, and on the rising ground near to them a mansion; that is Newington, the residence of Mr. Blaxland, whose father was the first English gentleman of property that settled in New South Wales. His widow, a lady much respected in the colony, had lately paid the debt of nature; and as she possessed the love of her family and the esteem of her friends, the sorrow for her loss was sincere. The present proprietor is a gentleman of that active and intelligent character whose labours in his own undertakings have proved a boon to the community: may that success attend him which they say belongs alone to the fortunate!

We arrived at Parramatta in good time; and as we have already described it, we will not tire the reader with any further remarks. The distance from here to Windsor, whence our steps were now directed, is twenty miles. The country all the way is well enclosed; but not by any means of such a good character as we expected. On the roadside

and near thereto are many farm-houses and several tolerably good inns. We have no doubt but that much of this country may one day be made available for agricultural purposes; not, however, so long as better land can be easily obtained elsewhere. It is hilly, with iron-bark trees abundant—indicating poor soil—some tea-tree scrubs on marshy land, and, generally speaking, it is said to be badly watered. Boxhill, belonging to the late Samuel Terry, is the most-improved and best-managed estate on the road; opposite which is Riverstone, the property of the late Sir Maurice O'Connell, who was commander of the forces in New South Wales.

As you approach Windsor the aspect of the country becomes more open, and shews greater signs of fertility as you near the banks of the Hawkesbury River. The town is situated upon a rising ground at the confluence of the South Creek with that river, which at this spot, and for several miles higher up, is of sufficient depth to float vessels of 100 tons and upwards. Windsor is thirty-five miles distant from Sydney by land, and about 160 miles by water; from this circumstance there is not much traffic on this noble stream between it and the capital of the colony. The population of the town of Windsor before the gold-discovery was about 1800; and it possesses 450 houses, many of them well built of stone and brick, with public buildings and places of worship equal to any in Parramatta. Besides which there are several large and excellent inns; and we can recommend that kept by Richard Ridge, where the traveller is certain of receiving great civility and good treatment for himself and horses. In the vicinity of the town there is a great quantity of good land; and in this respect it has many advantages over the neighbouring towns. Altogether, from its position and resources, this should be a stirring place of business; but looking at it as it is, one has some doubts whether it will recover the desertion of its inhabitants. And we are tempted to question the propriety of congratulating New South Wales on the gold-mines which nature has so lavishly bestowed upon her, when we see such thriving towns as this suddenly depopulated by their influence.

Near Windsor are many vineyards, where the soil and

situation are well adapted for the growth of the vine. We had the pleasure of being introduced to Mr. Hall, of ——, who has been very successful in producing good samples of wine, both red and white. And we will venture to give an opinion, that this gentleman's name, if he is able to stand his ground, will be well known beyond New South Wales. He superintends the making of his wines and cultivating the vines himself; and therefore he knows for a certainty that the wine is the produce of those vines they are presumed to be; and of course he is enabled to form correct opinions of their quality. Not far from Mr. Hall's is another vineyard upon a small farm tenanted by two Frenchmen. We were particularly struck with the industry of these men, and the order and cleanliness about their dwellings—a pattern to many of our careless countrymen in these colonies. They had every thing about them that was useful, both for farming operations as well as those for making wine, including proper cellars for keeping it when made. We thought that the legislature of the colony might be doing a benefit to other wine-growers by taking some sensible notice of these men and their vineyard. More could be learned from a view of their little farm and arrangements in the practical culture of the vine than by reading any number of treatises on the subject.

From Windsor we crossed the country in a southerly direction, until we reached the village of St. Mary's on the great western road, four miles from Penrith. On our way we crossed the Richmond road, about sixteen miles from Parramatta, and eight from St. Mary's. The country generally is heavily timbered with the iron-bark tree, a little distance from the water-courses; with here and there tea-tree brush. At the South Creek there are some fine farms; and when there was labour to be had in this part of the country, heavy crops must have been raised upon them to support such large establishments as we saw, judging from the granaries, and other buildings, most of which are now next to being unoccupied. The property on the South Creek is in the occupation of Mr. Lamb, a Sydney merchant, and a member of the legislative council for that city. On it there is a residence of the first class, suitable for a

gentleman with a large income. From this place to St. Mary's there is only a bush-road, not very easy for strangers to make out. The mountains in the distance give a character to this locality which is quite enlivening. In this district the timber on the different properties is beginning to be valuable; and at certain seasons there is good feed for sheep and cattle on the back lands.

It was nearly dark when we arrived at St. Mary's, distant from Sydney twenty-nine miles on the great western road. It is a long straggling village, possessing a very pretty little church, two very good inns—that at which we put up at was most comfortable—many nice snug-looking cottages, and some good gardens. The proprietor of the land on which it is built, the late Sir Maurice O'Connell, thought the beauty of the spot, the quality of the soil, and the advantage of a plentiful supply of water, together with the great western road passing through it, sufficient to lay out the plan of a large town upon the site. Acting upon this idea without due consideration, he caused the surveyors to lay out several squares, a market-place, terraces, and streets, and gave them grand names, so as to hand down to all time his own name and that of particular individuals. Some sites, however, are only intended for villages, and that of St. Mary's is one of them; as such it is a very pretty place. Penrith, on the other hand, which we noticed on our journey to Bathurst, has the requisites for a town; and there is every chance of its maintaining its ground in these days of a migratory population inhabiting the country. In the vicinity of these townships there are some very fine properties, and the best of land; among them is the estate of the late Sir John Jamieson on the banks of the Nepean River. Many proprietors in this neighbourhood are breaking up their large estates, and letting small farms to a working tenantry. Should this practice continue, it cannot fail to be advantageous to the colony generally, as well as to the proprietors.

From St. Mary's we pursued our journey still towards the south, crossing the western road, and taking the Bringelly and Penrith track, passing along it as far as the cow-pastures by various cross-paths, and at length coming into the Sydney and Camden Road, about two miles from the

town of Narellan. The country we passed through is hilly, and much better grassed than we expected to have seen. Here and there great improvements had been made by the settlers; and there were many establishments of apparently substantial men. On our right, far in the distance, we occasionally caught a sight of the Blue Mountains; and as we journeyed parallel with the course of the Nepean River, it was between us and them. Our impressions were much in favour of the country through which we were passing; there was a variety of hill and dale that was pleasing; and near the water-courses there were many really beautiful spots that appeared to be very good soil. It is true we were informed that it suffered much from droughts and hot winds; but not more, we presume, than other places. Altogether this tract of country is far superior to that between Parramatta and Windsor, or that between the latter town and Penrith.

On the following day we passed through Campbelltown, distant about eight miles from Narellan, over a hilly, poor country, partly under cultivation. That town is situated on the high road from Sydney to Illawarra, distant thirty-three miles. It lies in a hollow, and has a poverty-stricken aspect, as well as the surrounding country, and appears destined, we think, to become poorer. To Appin, from thence, is ten miles, whither we directed our steps. The road crosses over some rough hilly country, and then enters a forest of iron and stringy bark trees; after which it becomes more open, where you come upon a property going to decay. Its neat cottage-residence was unoccupied when we passed, the outhouses going to ruin, and the fences broken down in many places; leaving the impression that the property was valueless, or that it had been abandoned for want of labour. Throughout the whole of this district the latter was the case to a great extent. All able-bodied men and women had left for the gold-fields: labour, therefore, was high, and often not to be had at any price. Consequently all works were put a stop to, and the small holdings mostly deserted. It saddened us to see so many places, which the labour of man had subdued, returning to their original wild state. The work of abandonment has begun in this hitherto industrious land; the question

is, where will it stop? If the present state of the labour-market lasts for two or three years, this country will suffer more from this cause, than persons who make themselves busy in political matters they do not comprehend have any idea of; and they will find out that something more than gold is necessary for the real prosperity of the colonies.

As you enter the embryo town of Appin, the eye is gladdened with the sight of a number of oak-trees within fences on the borders of some fields; they looked flourishing and healthy, though the country was high, and the soil not favourable, as we thought. The oak grows well at the Cape of Good Hope; and there can be no reason why it should not succeed in New South Wales, being in the same latitude, on a similar soil, and in the same hemisphere. It would be a relief to the eye of the traveller, as it was to us on this occasion, to meet with the oak-tree more frequently in this colony; and we think the settlers would feel a pleasure in seeing a tree that would remind them of their native land. Appin is forty-five miles from Sydney, where the road to Illawarra crosses Tuggerah Creek.

To Wollongong from Appin there are three roads: first, the old one by Jordan's Creek; second, the old Bulli road; and third, the Richmond new line. We took the first road, as it commenced nearest to the town, passing by several farms on the way, where much had been done in the shape of improvements. Passing along for several miles over a rough country, we arrived at Jordan's Creek, the descent to which is difficult; and the ascent from it more so, and not free from danger. It might be possible to get a light cart across the ravine by the assistance of manual labour; but a dray with horses or bullocks it would be impossible to get over safely. At times the water rushes down in a mountain-torrent through its rocky channel, when neither man nor beast can cross. The sides of this stream are very rugged and precipitous; and its waters clear, sweet, and most refreshing. From this creek for nearly twenty miles the road is over a barren and mountainous country, leading you to Mount Keera, which overlooks the famed district of Illawarra, distinguished among

the other districts of the colony by the appropriate term of the "Garden of New South Wales."

From this eminence you command a magnificent prospect of the Illawarra country. This district—sometimes called the Five Islands, from a group of islets off the coast—is a truly beautiful, picturesque tract of land, containing 150,000 acres, measuring about eighteen miles along the coast, and extending several miles back, where it is bounded by the Illawarra range of mountains. This range is formed of stupendous mural precipices trending north and south parallel with the coast-line, and rising into high table-land to the westward. Of the northern section of the district you have a commanding prospect as far as the eye can reach from the spot where the view first bursts upon you.

Mount Keera is 1500 feet above the level of the sea, and Illawarra lies at its base; therefore the road which winds down the mountain-side is pretty steep in descending. As you proceed, the change from sterility in the vegetation to the greatest luxuriance is very remarkable. In a few minutes almost you are transported from a barren wilderness to green and luxuriant groves; and water, of which we could not find a drop from the time we left the Jordan until we reached Mount Keera, was here found near its summit in a trickling stream. The country we had traversed between was a sterile region of sand, on which alone grew dwarf Bottle-brush (*Banksia ericifolia*), stunted gum-trees (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), and occasionally small tufts of the dry yet beautiful heaths of Australia (*Epacris impressa* and *E. speciosissima*), with a few specimens of what is called the native pear-tree of New Holland, from the exact shape its seed-vessel bears to that fruit, only it is inserted on the stalk the reverse way. Here, at every step, on descending the mountain towards Wollongong, the trees are of great magnitude, consisting of the box, the turpentine, and the fig-tree (*Ficus Australis*). The wattle-tree (*Acacia dealbata*) also scented the air with its yellow blossoms as we brushed past them; and the tall and slender cabbage-palms (*Corypha Australis*) were gracefully festooned by the vines and creepers which entwined their stems. As we looked down on the dense

masses of foliage which grew in these "scrubs," we were reminded of a tropical forest's vegetation; and the idea was heightened by the palm-like fronds of the arborescent fern-trees (*Dicksonia antarctica*), and the giant trunks of the magnificent gum-trees (*Eucalypti*). These were all clustered together in dense thickets, which the rays of the sun could but feebly penetrate. In places where the sunlight had shone upon the earth from the falling of timber, or where it was cleared by fire, the most luxuriant grass had sprung up.

Directing your attention from these objects to the distant scenery as you descend, it is very striking, most romantic and interesting,—so different from any thing we had seen before in New South Wales or Victoria. On your right Mount Keebla rises magnificently, and towers above the range of mountains to the west; before you, on the plains below, commence the fertile lands of Illawarra; and on your left, to the eastward, is the boundless Pacific Ocean, studded with the Five Islands a short distance from the shore. At the time we descended Mount Keera it was in some respects unfortunate for us that the weather was hazy, with heavy, threatening clouds hanging over the mountains,—at the same time they threw a grander aspect over the whole scene.

As you continue to descend you find that cultivation has gradually crept up Mount Keera, and then you come to patches of the most luxuriant Indian corn. From the aspect of this mount we are of opinion that it would grow excellent grapes for wine and raisins. We were informed that coal had been found at its base of sufficiently good quality to fetch a fair remunerating price in the Sydney market. Arriving at the foot of the mountain, if you are proceeding to Wollongong, you must turn to the left: that place, however, was not yet our destination; we were on our way to Dapto, a small inland village to the south-west. Lake Illawarra is between this place and the sea; it is not deep, but it abounds in fish,—and they are said to be very fine when in season. There is the mullet, the bream, blackfish, whiting, schnapper, flathead, tailor-fish, guard-fish, jew-fish, and some others. In the tributary creeks to the lake—which are very numerous—

there are abundance of eels and small fish. From the turning off at the road which led down from the mountain, we passed through a cultivated enclosed country for seven miles. Good roads, good bridges—one of them an excellent one—good houses, in fact, every thing you saw had the appearance of there being plenty in the land, and there was an expression of content in every face we passed.

Before we could get under shelter at our destination the rain fell in torrents; the clouds, which had looked so threatening all the afternoon, now burst over the district. We were informed that these rains are of frequent occurrence; and to them, no doubt, is to be attributed the great fertility of the land we saw around us. Night had set in as we arrived at Dapto, where we took up our quarters at the hostelry of Mr. Brown, under whose roof the traveller is certain to meet with the best accommodation. This inn is situated on Mullet Creek, which derives its name from the abundance and goodness of that fish caught in its waters. We were informed by Mr. Brown that his house was thirty miles from Appin; which, added to the twenty miles from Narellan to that town, from whence we had started in the morning, made our day's journey fifty miles,—which is considered good travelling over such a mountainous country. But we must inform the reader that it was our good fortune to meet with an Illawarra farmer, Mr. Evan Evans—a native of Devonshire, a very intelligent, and, we heard, a successful man—who accompanied us from there; and travelling with one so well accustomed to the road, we escaped all difficulty in finding our way over the ranges. Fatigued, wet, and hungry, we required refreshment and rest; so after taking what was necessary for the inner man, we soon retired for the night, and slept, as only travellers can sleep, until morning.

Partaking of an early breakfast, we proceeded on our journey through the district. Four miles from Dapto, not far from Terry's River, we turned off the road to visit Mr. Evans' farm. Passing through good enclosures, we saw plenty of fat cattle and milch cows; and although the buildings were none of the most elegant, yet the thatching was very neat; in fact, every thing around, though rough, shewed substance and prosperity. The property, we un-

derstood from him, was not his own; and this circumstance was very probably the reason of the homestead being but that of a rough working farmer, such as is seen in some parts of the Weald of Sussex, where they look more to utility than ornament. However, he was building a better residence and premises on his own ground, on the opposite side of the road, nearer the mountains, where the land, he told us, was of a richer quality still.

In an hour we returned to the road along a different path; and after fording Terry's River, we ascended a high and steep hill. Surmounting this, the road leads over a succession of hills, with here and there some commencement of cultivation. These hills are covered with the same luxuriant vegetation as that seen on the eastern flank of Mount Keera; the timber is of the same gigantic growth; and the ravines and valleys display the same beautiful flowering shrubs; while the soil is equally good; and wherever cultivation had begun, there were great promises of an abundant crop. This description of country continues until you enter upon the low lands again, after twelve miles travelling from Dapto, where you descend into a valley watered by the Minumurra Creek, on the banks of which is situated the township of Jamberoo. This valley is a very pretty spot; and not only does it measure a considerable breadth of arable land, but the surrounding hills are covered with a fertile soil, all more or less enclosed and under cultivation. At the bottom of the valley there is an extensive swamp, said to contain more than two thousand acres, which in the dry season is covered with nutritious verdure, attracting the cattle far and near to it. From the inquiries we made, we do not hesitate to give an opinion that this marsh could be drained, there being a fall of some few feet. Once reclaimed, it would be as fine an agricultural property, for its extent, as any in New South Wales. We saw that European grasses and clovers thrive very well in this humid district, and the cattle depasturing on them were in the finest condition.

Notwithstanding the heavy rain which continued to fall, we made no stay at Jamberoo, but proceeded over the hills to the township of Kiama, eight miles distant in an easterly direction, on the sea-coast. These hills have been broken

up into farms in every direction; and the country is cleared of timber to a great extent, shewing its undulating character, which has always a pleasing appearance. When you reach the highest part of them, you command a view of what appears not unlike a lake at the end of a valley; but on a nearer approach, you find it to be the little bay of Kiama, where small coasting-vessels find an anchorage; though it is far from safe, being open to the north-east. The town of Kiama is on this bay, eighty-eight miles from Sydney, and very beautifully situated. It is a rising place, surrounded by land of the finest quality, to the water's edge; and the scenery of the country behind strikingly picturesque. And now that there is a small steamboat to touch at it from Sydney, it may become a place of resort for those who seek relief from illness, or repose from the toils of business. The climate is peculiarly mild for a winter residence, if we may judge from the great height to which the Australian palm-tree grows; and the ranges towards the west promise shelter from the hot winds of the Australian summer, from which it is difficult to escape.

Leaving Kiama, we journeyed onwards due south, intending, if possible, to reach Coolangatta, the residence of Mr. Berry, distant sixteen miles, before night. The road was very bad, and cut up by the heavy rain, which still fell: on your left is the sea, and on your right the country is hilly. It is pleasing to pass the number of small farms you see on either side of the road; the possessors of them appear independent men, made so by being industrious, and expending their labour upon a fertile soil. Many of them had horses and cattle, besides their farm-steadings; and those who had been any length of time on the land possessed all that was useful and comfortable in conducting the operations of a dairy-farm. About four miles on the way you come to an extensive flat covered with the most verdant pasture; formerly it was a swamp, and at times overflowed with water. No one thought of reclaiming it, until fortune brought a Mr. Richard Millar there; he saw that something could be made of it; he drained it; and now it is the richest of pasture-lands, supporting many cows for his extensive dairy, and fattening a number of oxen, which he sends to the Sydney market. The rain still falling

heavily, and our destination nearly twelve miles off, we reached within two miles a part of a road where you have to travel along the sea-beach, and were told that the tide was unfavourable for us to proceed; so we made the best of it, and accepted the invitation of a small farmer to remain for the night under shelter of his hut. He is a tenant under the landowner, on a clearing lease; a system that has been acted upon with success by many landed proprietors in the district of Illawarra. The house was a poor tenement, but its inmates were rich in kindness; they gave us what they had with a welcome, and we were thankful. His name is John Stapleton of Geringong.

In the morning we started for Coolangatta, which is situated on the Shoalhaven River at the extreme south of the Illawarra country; the son of our host accompanying us to the Long beach, where a small river falls into the sea, under some high land. To this point, some two or three miles, the soil is of the richest description, the brush-land particularly; and even where it is heavily timbered, it repays the labour expended on clearing it better than more open lands with a poorer soil. Crossing the river, and proceeding along the beach, should the tide be out, you can gallop on the hard sand for six or seven miles. We were fortunate in finding it so, otherwise it would have been heavy travelling on the loose sands, or through the belt of scrub, which here lies along the coast, about a mile in width. After riding comfortably in this manner the distance we have mentioned, we turned from the beach, and entered this belt of land, through which a road has been cut, and a bridge built over a small creek. Crossing this bridge we emerged from the dense brushwood, and suddenly came into a beautiful open country, with Coolangatta Mountain rising to the height of nine hundred feet before us. This view is exceedingly picturesque: on your left is the dark belt of wood skirting the sea; on your right a forest of the finest timber; and before you is the beautiful conical hill we have named, seen through an open space of considerable breadth, extending for upwards of a mile to its base, which slopes down to the mouth of the Shoalhaven River. On this slope, which faces the south, is the residence of Alexander Berry, Esq., a member of the legis-

lature. It is a cottage-residence, having a large verandah in front, with numerous offices and small dwellings behind; the whole forming a square of some extent. The proprietor was from home; but we were most hospitably received by his two brothers and a sister, and every attention was paid to our comfort.

In the morning, accompanied by Mr. Berry's brothers, we rode partly, and climbed partly, to the summit of this picturesque mountain. Coolangatta, or Colingatta—as it is sometimes spelt—rises, as we were informed, nine hundred feet high; and it appears fully that height, from the circumstance of its base being at the level of the sea. It is of a conical shape; and to the very top the soil is of the richest kind, every where covered thickly with grass. Mr. Berry has cut down the trees on the ridge which forms the spur sloping towards the house, so that there are not any trees to obstruct the view as you ascend. After climbing many parts much too steep to ride, we arrived at the summit, and were amply repaid for our trouble. The view from this eminence, as well as of the hill itself, is splendid; you are perched upon the pinnacle of a mountain, rising in giant-like grandeur from a plain, supported, as it were, by three spurs, which, from the elevation of the eye, appear like buttresses; one is towards the house, a second stretching to the confluence of the Broughton and Shoalhaven Rivers, and a third towards the country inland; all three being about equidistant, and giving what we should call a graceful form to the mountain. On a fine day the view of the surrounding country is one of the most beautiful we remember to have seen in the colony. Looking towards the east, you have the coast-line running north and south, strongly marked by the broad dark belt of wood which we have mentioned, and dividing the wide expanse of ocean beyond from the open and cultivated lands lying at your feet, which surround the residence of the proprietor of the mount. Glancing your eye along the spur on which the house is built, you see a green meadow at its foot, on the margin of the Shoalhaven River, which stream cuts through the belt of scrub into the sea. Beyond the river appear the waters of Shoalhaven and Crookhaven connected together by a canal cut by the enterprising pro-

prietor, and forming an island of the headland between; in this channel there is sufficient water for a small steamer or coasting-vessel to enter. This brings your prospect more to the south, where an extensive lagoon is visible; and, in the far distance, the harbour of Jervis' Bay. Turning a little towards the interior, between the distant ranges and the banks of the river, are broad flat lands, which the application of modern improvements in draining and culture by Mr. Berry have made a valuable property. To the westward you see the Broughton River at your feet, winding through a wide plain, shewing here and there evidences of man's industry; and in the mountains beyond are the famous Shoalhaven gullies, ravines of great depth, from 500 to 1200 feet, and of tremendous appearance. Lastly, turning to the north, you have the splendid view, coastways, terminated by Mount Keera. During our ascent and descent of the mountain, our enjoyment of the surrounding scenery was considerably disturbed by the swarms of mosquitoes which tormented us; they say they favour strangers more with their attentions than the people living in the country: we can speak of their having punished us on this occasion.

We returned to breakfast, passing through the cultivated ground near the house; and we could not but remark the completeness and extent of this princely property, which may be said to bound the view within scope of this beautiful peak. Mr. Berry selected this spot in the early times of the colony, when grants from the crown could be obtained on easier terms than now. And certainly the property, not from its extent alone, but from the richness of the land—stated to be superior to that of Illawarra—is perhaps the most valuable in New South Wales. The improvements which have been added to it from time to time, and the application of the best system of culture to the soil, have made these broad lands what they are—a princely possession, which we trust the respected proprietor may long live to enjoy. As we were pressed for time, we were compelled to deny ourselves the pleasure of remaining a few days with the agreeable inmates of this delightful residence; so we lost no time in getting back to Dapto, and from thence to Wollongong.

This little seaport town is sixty miles from Sydney, containing between 500 and 600 inhabitants, and upwards of a hundred well-built houses, several places of worship, and a few good inns. It is becoming a place of considerable commercial importance in the colony, from being the principal shipping-port for the produce of this fertile district, which commands a preference-price for its butter in the Sydney market. Although little more than an open roadstead naturally, the bay on which the town is situated has been rendered safe shelter for vessels, by cutting into the rock on the south side, and building a substantial stone pier; thereby forming a harbour and jetty, safe at all times for a steamer to come alongside. We were informed that this was amongst the last of the works constructed by the prisoners before the colony ceased to be a penal settlement; and Illawarra is well pleased at the completion of the work. An enlargement of the harbour, by the construction of an outer breakwater, has been spoken of; but the one they have will do very well for the present.

We cannot say that the immediate neighbourhood of Wollongong presents any picturesque scenery equal to the other parts of Illawarra; its characteristic is richness of soil. The well-fed appearance of the cattle met with in a short ramble round the neighbourhood, is proof also of the nutritious qualities of the pasture, to which they have evidently unstinted access. The well-kept fences in every direction within the environs of the town, the value set upon the land, and the care bestowed upon its cultivation and pasture, all evince the prosperity of the settlers. And we cannot take our leave of this beautiful little district and its hospitable inhabitants, without noticing a feature in their manners which no one can fail to observe in riding through it. There appears to exist amongst them a more kindly, friendly feeling than you commonly meet with in other parts of the colony; and the stranger who has travelled far and wide in the land, like ourselves, is agreeably surprised at the good-humoured "Good day!" with which he is accosted in his wandering through the fertile, beautiful, and romantic district of Illawarra.

In the afternoon we embarked on board the *William IV.* steamboat for Sydney, where we did not arrive, in

consequence of the slowness of the boat, until the following morning, after encountering a most tempestuous night at sea, mingled with rain and thunder. Since then another vessel has been put into the trade possessing greater speed; and the passage to Wollongong is now accomplished in little more than one-half the time occupied by the old boat. As we entered Port Jackson heads in the gloom of the night, with the cliffs occasionally lit up by gleams of lightning, the scene was indescribably grand. And the lighthouse on the south head, shedding its revolving light on all around, looked like a giant watch-tower guarding the entrance to the portals of a mighty castle. From the tempestuous ocean we were soon safely within the placid waters of Sydney harbour, where the swell of the Pacific subsides into the ripple of a lake.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS.

Their extent and importance—The Authors' experiences among them—The Hunter River and its tributaries—Three divisions of the Hunter River districts—Exposed to droughts—Town and harbour of Newcastle—Burwood coal-mines—Smelting works—Potteries—Woollen cloth factories—Scope for the manufacturer—Mechanical talent lost in the colony—East and West Maitland—Tobacco manufactures—Vineyards—Port Stephens—Village of Stroud—Australian Agricultural Company's land—Gloucester and the surrounding country—Township of Port Macquarie—Climate of the northern districts—Their tropical vegetation—The Bunya Bunya tree of Moreton Bay—The fig-tree of the Macleay river—Superior condition of the northern aborigines—Their mode of cooking fish—The black "labourer is worthy of his hire"—The natives have a clear perception of natural justice—Moreton Bay—North and South Brisbane—Tropical productions of the northern districts—Cotton, coffee, &c. grown at Eagle farm—Dearth of labour in the northern districts.

ALTHOUGH we intend in the present chapter to do but little more than allude to the northern counties and districts of New South Wales, yet, on some future occasion, if the reception of these pages by the public be favourable, we may be encouraged to enter into details relative to those extensive regions. Their topography and statistics are so little known to the British public, that many of our readers will be surprised when we state that they cover an area of *inhabited* country equal in extent to the Province of Victoria, which, as we have before remarked, is about one-fifth larger than the kingdom of England; that these districts possess rivers and harbours second to none in the south for beauty and utility; that for richness of land and excellence of climate, they possess all that is requisite for the use and comfort of man; that great part of those delightful regions are open downs, containing millions of acres of land covered with the most luxuriant natural pas-

turage, at an elevation of fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, which renders the climate comparatively cool in these low latitudes; that these lands are occupied by a high-minded and superior class of settlers, possessing hundreds of thousands, nay millions of sheep, cattle, and horses; that this high table-land is a considerable distance back from the ocean, with an intervening tract of country of vast extent, possessing navigable rivers where steam-boats and coasting-vessels find profitable traffic, and a busy population for the last twenty years and more have not only been cultivating the fertile soil on their banks, but even building ships of considerable tonnage, out of the native timber, to transport the produce; and from these facts will have some idea of the extent and importance of this part of the territory of New South Wales, and may well wonder at the advancement of civilisation, and development of the resources of this section of Eastern Australia, hitherto so little known in England.

Besides having been eye-witnesses of all that we have described in the preceding chapters, our joint experiences and travels extend over the greater portion of the territory just alluded to; and one of the authors of this book has explored the intertropical regions at the northern boundary of the colony, in the capacity of a naturalist; from whence he has enriched the museums of the United Kingdom with new and interesting contributions from the animal and vegetable productions peculiar to that locality. In this field alone there is abundant materials to fill an ordinary volume; but we refrain from entering into details, until we have more scope for our pen; and for the present venture only upon a few cursory remarks respecting the most important of these districts, without which our sketch of the colony would be incomplete.

The districts comprised within the system of waters forming the Hunter River are better fitted for agriculture than pasture; hence they are more densely populated than the squatting districts farther north; and it will be seen on the map that they are comprised within five of the original nineteen counties of New South Wales, viz. Northumberland, Durham, Hunter, Philip, and Brisbane. The Hunter River, which enters the sea about eighty miles to the north-

ward of Port Jackson, has a course of about two hundred miles from its source in the Liverpool range of mountains, running in a southerly and easterly direction; but it is not navigable from its entrance at Port Hunter further than the town of Morpeth, some thirty-five miles distant by water. Powerful sea-going steamers ply between Sydney and this town daily; from which circumstance it is becoming a very important place. This river has many tributary streams, two of which are of considerable magnitude; the first you come to is about twenty miles from the harbour of Newcastle at Port Hunter, and is called the Williams River: the second is fifteen miles higher up, called the Paterson River; and these two streams are navigable for a greater distance than the principal stream or main river. There are many flourishing towns, villages, and farms, with gentlemen's residences on its banks, and on those of the streams that fall into it.

There appear to be three marked divisions in the capabilities and climate of this extensive section of the colony, viz. the pasture-lands on the Upper Hunter and its feeders; the agricultural lands on the Lower Hunter and its tributaries, the Williams and Paterson Rivers; and the barren lands near the coast, with their valuable coal-mines. Those three divisions are commonly understood by the colonists, although they do not appear traced out on any official map; and they are said to be more or less exposed to the visitation of droughts, the coast being freer from them than the mountain section, where they are, again, less injurious than in the middle portion. Notwithstanding the abundance of fertile land on this noble river, the farmer is at all times unsafe with his crops, from the occurrence of these dreadful visitations, which are very uncertain. The effects of these droughts may be seen even upon the native trees, which in many places are completely destroyed, although growing upon the alluvial soil near the river. We, however, travelled through this country during the best season and in a most favourable year, when the land was clothed with verdure and the crops flourishing; and unless we had been assured from unquestionable evidence, we could not have believed that so lovely a country ever suffered from the want of rain; such, however, is the case; and the tra-

veller less fortunate than ourselves may visit the Hunter River district and find it a blighted region. In speaking thus plainly of this part of the colony, we are bound to state what it would be a suppression of the truth to withhold. New South Wales, however, can well afford to have the whole truth told; and still the balance will be found greatly to preponderate in her favour. To our apprehension she has more formidable difficulties to contend with in the question of the future supply of labour, and in the management of the plethora of riches with which she seems likely to be oppressed, interfering, as we fear they will do, with the former industrious pursuits of the people.

The principal towns in this district are Newcastle, Maitland, and Morpeth. The first is a seaport town situated at the mouth of the river, about eighty miles from Sydney, and affords safe anchorage for vessels of large burden. It has little to recommend it as a place of residence, being built upon sandhills between the river and the sea-beach, without a tree or patch of natural verdure to relieve the glare of the drift-sand. It contains nearly three hundred houses, with about fifteen hundred inhabitants. It is a place which, under ordinary circumstances, should progress rapidly in commercial importance, from being the outport of the produce from this extensive district, which includes the only workable coal-mines of any extent in the colony. From this latter circumstance, its name was changed from King's-town to Newcastle, after the famous capital of the land of coal and grindstones. There were several large vessels at anchor in the harbour when we visited it; among them one of nine hundred tons, which could not approach the wharf; but when this is finished, with other projected works, the facilities for shipping will be much improved. The Australian Agricultural Company possess the coal-mines nearest to the town; which are so advantageously situated for shipping purposes, that the coasting-vessels lie under a shute within a hundred yards of the pit's mouth, from whence the coals are discharged into them without any extra labour in loading. In fact, the seam of coal is now being worked under the bed of the river, and the town itself is built above it; the edge of the seam cropping out on the coast; where the student of geo-

logy may find some interesting fossils amongst the shale which separates it from the sandstone.

Until within the last few years these coal-mines were worked under a monopoly granted to the Australian Agricultural Company by the government; but this has been successfully upset by some spirited landholders on the Hunter River, who possess coal on their properties, and who now work them in fair competition with the company; and we may safely say, that under the increased demand for coal, not only for steam purposes and home consumption in the colony, but the high price it brings in New Zealand and California, there is every likelihood of these mines realising fortunes for their proprietors equal to the possessors of the more glittering diggings. Among the private collieries now at work we may mention those on the Burrwood estate, three miles from Newcastle, stated to be more inexhaustible and of better quality than the company's mines. We visited them, and were most obligingly shewn over the works by an intelligent Scotch miner named James Birrell. The road to them from the town, for the first half of the way, is the common road, and then a tramway for the remaining half. The workings commence at the foot of a hill, where we entered a tunnel cut through solid coal, about five feet and a half high, and double that width, with an equal depth of workable coal above, passing through the hill, and opening out into a small valley. From this main tunnel there are two branch tunnels half its width running into the hill, each of two hundred yards in length, the working "bands" being of the same dimensions, with a stratum of fire-clay eighteen inches thick. It is proposed to run these branch tunnels right through, to the cliffs on the coast, many hundred yards distant, where the coal-seams are seen. When an act of council is obtained to extend the tramroad to the wharf, it will enhance the value of these mines considerably, as the coal may then be sent to the shipping direct from the seam.

Where so much coal abounds, the intelligent reader will conclude that there is no part of Australia better situated for the establishment of manufactories requiring that indispensable material to conduct their operations than

Newcastle and its neighbourhood. Already there are large smelting works erected, which we visited when in full work, and were very much gratified to see the mode in which they smelted copper ores from Adelaide, and saw the fine quality of metal extracted from the famous Burra Burra mine ores. Besides this manufactory we visited a pottery, but the proprietor and his men had gone to the gold-fields; and crossing the river to the township of Stockton, opposite Newcastle, we visited a large and complete tweed-cloth factory belonging to two enterprising colonists, Messrs. Fisher and Donaldson. In fact, had the labour of the country not been disturbed by the discovery of the gold-fields, there was a growing desire amongst the capitalists of the colony to concentrate their means in establishing factories of the kind we have mentioned on the banks of this river. And we are not talking wide of the mark when we say, that with the return of that labour few investments will pay better than those of the manufacturer of the raw materials produced in the colony.

There is such a field in the resources already developed in Australia for the enterprising manufacturers of this country, that we cannot but advert to it more fully; in which they may not only realise a handsome remuneration for their skill and experience, but with the necessary means and appliances of capital and labour, are certain of amassing fortunes in a short time. As we have already mentioned, there is even at the present early stage of colonial progress, a visible step in this direction. Such articles as leather, soap, tweed-cloths, &c. are rapidly disappearing from the import-list of the colony; and the numerous extensive manufactories of these articles of general consumption have amply rewarded their enterprising projectors. The transparent fact that the tweed-cloth manufacturers save the freight of the raw material to England, and that of the manufactured article back to the seat of its production, is enough, we should say, to encourage the most cautious man in Yorkshire to establish broad-cloth looms in Australia, seeing that the coat worn of this fabric by the colonists has circumnavigated the globe between the sheep's back and his own. Surely there is some good profit to be made, notwithstanding the higher price of labour

in the colony, by saving the intermediate expense of transit, where the wool travels 16,000 miles in its raw state to be manufactured. Those interested will find that this is only one of the many products in Australia which could be turned to equally profitable account by the enterprising manufacturer. It seems surprising, even as it is, that writing and printing papers should be imported, when such abundant materials for their manufacture have been running to waste, among the calico-clothed population of these colonies; or that a wine-glass or tumbler should be imported, when such a pure element for the composition of crystal is to be found in the snow-white sands of Sydney and Newcastle. Although much has been done, considering the age of these colonies, there is ample scope for British capital and labour in this important field.

Besides the profits accruing from the establishment of such factories, the projectors would be serving a higher purpose in the general progress of the colony than merely developing its material resources, for their establishments would become industrial schools for developing those inventive and constructive talents of the Australian youth, which the rude operations of producing the raw material do not bring into play. We hope in time to see the industrious and steady class of artisans augmented in those colonies; a class of men whose influence would tend to raise the population to that standard of intelligence to which their fellow-subjects in the towns of the mother country have attained. There is no doubt that the rising generation of this new world, like their cousins on the other side of the Atlantic, inherit the mechanical genius of their forefathers; a genius which has raised the Anglo-Saxon race far above all others in the field of labour, where strength, utility, and invention have been the *desiderata*. The "currency-lads," we trust, are not all destined to be shepherds and gold-diggers, any more than that this embryo nation is to remain always dependent upon Great Britain for her supplies of merchandise. There are greater ends recorded, we hope, in the book of Time for it and them. We expect to see one of the corner-stones of Australia's future national superstructure raised by their industrious and inventive energies; for, however beneficial the present large

amount of manufactures consumed by the extravagant colonists may prove to the British manufacturer and merchant, the loss is great to the colony, seeing that the money expended for labour upon these manufactures is spent *out* of the country, while much of the material of which they are made exists around them.

About thirty-eight miles from Newcastle, by water, Wallis Creek joins the Hunter River from the south; on each side of this creek is the double township of Maitland, named East and West Maitland accordingly. The former is about twenty miles from Newcastle—though by water it is nearly double that distance—one hundred and twenty miles from Sydney, and three miles from Morpeth, which we have stated to be the head of navigation on the Hunter River. There is said to be a deficiency of good drinkable water at this town, which is certainly a great drawback, for it is most pleasantly situated. There are two very good churches in it, one Episcopalian, the other Roman Catholic; about two hundred and fifty houses, one half built of stone and brick. A branch of the Bank of Australasia conducts its business here in an exceedingly good building. Before the gold discovery it contained about one thousand inhabitants. West Maitland, on the opposite side of the creek, is more than double the size of East Maitland, and contains a population nothing short of two thousand five hundred, though not the original township. While East Maitland is built upon a site laid out by government, this town has risen on the lands of private individuals; and it has not only taken the lead in every respect of its eastern sister, but it is likely to keep it. There are several well-built places of worship here, and it is full of very excellent private houses, shops, inns, flour-mills, &c. &c.; in short, it is the chief town of the Hunter River district, and is the centre of an extensive agricultural country. These advantages, combined with the traffic passing through it from the districts of New England and Liverpool plains, have made it what it is. It also possesses one of the best provincial newspapers in the colony; and the manner in which this paper, the *Maitland Mercury*, is conducted is highly creditable to the editor, and calculated to do much good to the community.

Near both East and West Maitland coal-mines are worked of very superior quality, and abundant in quantity. Tobacco also is being manufactured here after the American manner; and as the same skill is applied by Messrs. Walthall and Clarke, two American gentlemen, who were formerly engaged in the manufacture of it in their own country, we cannot see any reason why Australian tobacco should not equal in quality that of American. The Hunter and its tributaries have also their vineyards; and the wines made from the grapes promise to have a reputation beyond the shores of Australia. Among the most successful growers we may mention Mr. King of Irrawang; and the champagne of Mr. Burnett will be pronounced to be very fine by those who know what champagne really is.

About twenty miles north of Port Hunter is the entrance to Port Stephens, a snug harbour; which often proves a welcome haven to coasting-vessels when the north-east gales catch them off Sugar-loaf Point. The principal stream which flows into this estuary is the Karuah River, navigable as far as Booral, twenty-seven miles from the entrance of the harbour. Here is situated a tract of land belonging to the Australian Agricultural Company, consisting of 437,102 acres. The township of Stroud, which the company have built on this property, we have no hesitation in saying is one of the neatest and most compact villages in the colony. It is situated on the east bank of the Karuah River, and is altogether one of the prettiest places we have seen in these northern counties. Opposite each house there is a small garden-plot, and behind some are larger gardens, filled with all kinds of flowers and fruit trees, amongst which the orange-tree grows conspicuously. The houses are mostly built in the cottage style, for the labouring people employed on the property; the residences of the officers of the company are very good and comfortable, and that of the governor is a mansion. There is a small church likewise, capable of holding about two hundred people; and as we happened to be there on a Sunday, we have seldom seen a more attentive and decent congregation than were on that day assembled within its walls. The surrounding country abounds in equally pic-

turesque spots to the one selected; and some one remarked that other sites might have been fixed upon for the township with more propriety than the present one: perhaps this might have been done, taking all things into consideration; but it is difficult at first to fix upon the best locality, where all are so beautiful. Much has been said about the local management of the Australian Agricultural Company. Without entering into that question, we must say that we were exceedingly gratified with the aspect of affairs at this truly English village; not only at seeing the general appearance of comfort and cleanliness in the dwellings, and on the persons of all the labourers in their employment, but also at hearing the cottagers express their gratitude and contentment at the treatment they received from the company's superintendents. And we were very favourably impressed with the good feeling and judicious management of those intrusted with such important duties.

The distance from Stroud to the Manning River, which is the northern boundary of the company's land, is about forty-five miles. We rode over greater part of this country, and considered it very good pasture-land; some of it particularly so, apparently well suited for farms. The line of road which passes through it from north to south is tolerably good as far as Gloucester, and a little way beyond it. This is one of the company's stations, of which there are several on the road. We were much pleased with the country about it, which consists of broad meadows, surrounded by rugged and picturesque mountains, not too near. On the higher lands we noticed what are considered indications of the presence of gold, particularly the abundance of quartz, which forms the character of the rocks. But gold has not always been found where this mineral occurs; and if we are not in error, we think that it is only in what geologists call quartz-veins that it occurs, the amorphous masses of quartz-rock being non-auriferous: its presence, however, encourages the people to search for the precious metal. But this part of the territory has a value independently of these indications, from its great capabilities in an agricultural point of view, and for the rearing of stock. At Gloucester there is a small inn, kept by a man of the name of Bradley, and no doubt in time it will

become a village; at present, however, it is only a station, where an overseer resides, having a great many other stations under his charge, far and near to it. We were informed that the company possess here a thousand horses, three thousand head of cattle, and as many as twenty thousand sheep. The herds and flocks we passed during our journey appeared to be in excellent condition; which is not only a certain indication of good pasture-land, but also of good management. The gold-fever had extended to this establishment; and no doubt much trouble will be experienced in consequence, from the difficulty of retaining shepherds and stockmen sufficient to conduct the operations of the surrounding stations.

About one hundred and seventy-eight miles to the northward of Port Stephens, by the coast, is the town and harbour of Port Macquarie, one of the beautiful marine retreats of New South Wales. During our short stay at this pleasant spot we met many very agreeable people residing in its neighbourhood; and we regret that circumstances over which the inhabitants had no control have made this pretty place a deserted village. This is one of the old penal settlements on the coast, and in those days it was described to us as a stirring place, deriving its prosperity from a large government expenditure, which had stopped entirely on the cessation of transportation; the consequences of which were, that many highly respectable men were ruined. At present, it mainly depends upon its progress, or rather recovering its former prosperity, from the large population springing up in the New England district, of which there is a likelihood of its becoming the outlet for their produce. We are afraid, however, that the inhabitants speculate too much upon these future prospects; for they cannot shut their eyes to the fact that Port Macquarie is only a bad harbour for very small coasting vessels, and not always safely to be entered even by them; and we think it very questionable whether the locality has capabilities of being made better. Still, in the town and its suburbs, there is much that is promising; you see many exceedingly good houses, churches, and schools; and as a place of residence for persons from the interior, or for invalids, we can quite understand, with its beautiful

rides in the neighbourhood, why its sanguine occupants look forward to its becoming a place of resort for their wealthy fellow-colonists in the south. The people of New South Wales possess the same tastes for marine residences and watering-places as their forefathers in England, or their cousins in America. The latter have their Saratogas and their Newports; so the Anglo-Australians among their many places of resort for health and amusement may number Port Macquarie.

Thus far we have glanced at the northern counties of New South Wales, coming within the limits of what is called the old settled boundary of the colony. We now come to notice more particularly those northern districts which are distinguished from the south by their marked character in climate and vegetation, such as the Clarence River, Darling Downs, Moreton Bay, and Wide Bay districts. Unlike the country to the south and west of the Hunter River, this northern section of the colony is not subject to those calamitous droughts, from which the settlers in the older parts of the country have suffered in some years so fearfully. In these intertropical regions there are regular wet and dry seasons, which occur periodically upon the setting-in of the north-east trade winds, frequently reaching as high as 28° south latitude; whereas in the southern section of the colony the weather is variable, and showery, more or less, throughout the year. And we would here remark, that when we have spoken in the foregoing pages of wet and dry seasons, we merely allude to the summer and winter months, the former being less rainy than the latter, excepting when a drought occurs, which has no regard to seasons. North of the latitude also above mentioned, although the weather is considerably warmer during the year, the thermometer averaging ten degrees higher, still the country is not subject to those blighting hot winds which occur annually in the south, and which are most severely felt in Victoria. At the same time we must confess, that it is not such a healthy climate to reside in as the less humid regions of the south; it does not possess, generally, that pure and dry atmosphere which distinguishes the climate of Australia from all others we have experienced; and the humidity which prevails during

the hottest months in the year enervates the European constitution.

This marked difference in the climate of the two sections of the colony, which we have thus rather arbitrarily laid down, produces many new features in the character of the vegetation; and we may safely assert, that while the north possesses all the shrubs and trees which adorn the south, she has thousands of distinct species possessing tropical luxuriance, added to her wondrous groves and forests. We should not say that timber was of good quality, generally speaking, in New South Wales; but in the regions of the north the timber is not only of a much finer growth than in the south, but it has the appearance of being sounder in quality. The cedar from the Clarence River is highly valued in the London market, and some of the logs imported here have been considered equal in beauty of grain to the finest mahogany. The Moreton Bay chestnut also is a handsome tree, and excellent timber; and the Moreton Bay pine is as useful for building materials in that part of the colony as the Baltic pine is in England; while, to our taste, it surpasses in elegance of form the Norfolk Island pine, of which so much has been said.

Among this beautiful genus of pines, known to botanists as the genus *Auracaria*, is one species worthy of being separately mentioned, viz. the "Bunya Bunya" of the aborigines, or *Auracaria Bidwellii*, named after Mr. Bidwell, an accomplished botanist, and commissioner of crown lands for the Wide Bay district. This magnificent pine has been only found within a small tract of country, situated between Wide Bay and Moreton Bay, at the northern boundary of the colony, in latitude 26° S.; and is generally associated with the Moreton Bay pine (*A. Cuninghamii*) in the dense pine-scrubs which intersect that country. It grows but sparingly compared to the latter tree, and may be easily distinguished from it by the large and umbrageous foliage it displays on its branches, which only grow from the top of the tree, leaving the trunk naked for two-thirds of its length from the butt. The most remarkable part, however, of this tree, is the cone which it bears. This large cluster of seed-vessels, when full grown, commonly measures 30 inches in circumference and 12 inches

in height; and numbers about 150 conical-shaped seed-vessels, as hard as a nut, each containing an edible kernel larger than that of a walnut. The aborigines roast these seeds, crack the husk between two stones, and eat them while they are hot. They taste something like a yam, or hard dry potato, and we have relished them exceedingly with a little salt. Though these cones may be found occasionally growing on a solitary tree, yet there is a periodical season in which they bear abundantly, and that occurs only once every four years, when the fruit is gathered ripe for six or eight months. This season is held as a great festival amongst the aborigines of the surrounding country, when they congregate at this particular locality in greater numbers than they are known to do in any other part of Australia, many of them coming from a distance of 200 miles to participate in the "Bunya Bunya" feast. We visited the spot during this quartennial season, and witnessed some of the most interesting traits in the character of these sable children of the forest, which we hope to lay before the reader in another volume; suffice it to say, for the present, that they all get sleek and fat upon this food, especially the children. The local government have passed an act prohibiting the demolition of those trees by the settlers, under heavy penalties.

The forests and dense scrubs which abound in the northern districts are more umbrageous than in the south. The picturesque apple-tree and broad-leaved fig-trees grow more plentifully throughout them, contrasting favourably with the thin-leaved gum-trees and pines. The latter genus of trees (*Ficus*) are very singular in their growth. On the banks of the Macleay River—a stream to the northward of Port Macquarie—we saw some plants in all their stages of development. From these specimens it would appear as if the seed was first conveyed by birds or other animals to the decayed part of the trunk, a hole in the branches, or a crevice in the bark of an ordinary gum-tree, from whence a creeper is produced, with its roots growing downwards, sometimes clasping the trunk of the tree, and sometimes dropping perpendicularly from the branches, until they finally enter the ground; while the stem of the plant climbs upwards, throwing out branches,

which entwine themselves round those of the doomed tree, until they ultimately envelope it in their snake-like folds, crushing its aged trunk, and preventing the circulation of its sap, which soon destroys it; the creeper becoming a tree itself, while the old tree rots away. From its numerous descending roots cementing or growing together, the trunk of the fig-tree has the appearance of buttresses and columns; and as they are all surface-roots, they spread out from the butt of the tree, upraised many feet from the ground, like walls; spreading in their ramifications as far from the trunk as the branches rear themselves aloft, which we have seen to the height of 200 feet. It has a thick, smooth leaf, like the India-rubber tree; its fruit is like the Turkey fig, only much smaller, and when ripe is sweet and palatable; the birds are fond of it, especially pigeons, which afford excellent shooting for the sportsman in Australia. Mr. Henry Oakes, of the Macleay, at whose place we saw the fig-trees just described, possesses two enormous trees of this kind, one of them measuring 48 feet in circumference in the trunk, not including its singularly upraised roots. These trees he purposes to spare from the woodman's axe; and it is our impression that those who may visit that, or any other locality where they grow luxuriantly, will say that they are among the most remarkable vegetable productions of this interesting land; and as they exude a white glutinous milk when probed with a knife, which the aborigines use to fix feathers in their hair, it is probable that they may be turned to some useful account, and this milky sap prove to be one of the juices from which gutta-percha or India-rubber is made.

The aborigines of the northern districts are also a more robust people than those inhabiting the south; most probably from the country yielding them a greater abundance of natural food, and the temperature of the climate being more congenial to their attenuated bodies. Moreton Bay, in these respects, is essentially the paradise of the Australian aboriginal inhabitants; there they may revel in the freedom and nakedness of mother nature throughout all seasons, without the encumbrance of opossum-skin rugs and blankets, which are necessary to protect them from the cold south winds in the higher latitudes; and the waters

of the bay furnish them with an abundance of nourishing animal food, which the bays on the southern coast do not possess. What will our aldermanic readers think of the condition of these poor (?) natives, when we state the fact, that they dine frequently off roasted turtles? In our sojournings amongst the many interesting localities of this extensive bay, we have often partaken of a choice cutlet of turtle with our sable brethren, from a five-hundred-weight animal, cooked in its own shell; and we can aver that it was far more savoury than the spiced dishes John Bull has served up from *calipash* and *calipee*, in the shape of turtle-steaks and turtle-soup. The fact is, the *chef de cuisine* at the Mansion House might add a recipe or two worth knowing to his cookery-book from these natural gourmands. We confess ourselves a little bit of an epicure in the mode of cooking fish; and their simple method seems to us the best we have ever seen for preserving the natural juices of a delicate fish. They first collect the hot ashes from a large fire made of the mangrove-tree, which are white and free from burning embers; then the fish is taken "all alive," without being gutted or scaled, and buried in these hot ashes for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. When it is sufficiently baked the gut comes out in one mass, and the skin peals off whole, leaving the flakes of meat firm, white, and savoury, with the natural fat and gravy of the fish, which in civilised cookery are lost; the former being thrown away with the gut, and the latter escaping through the scraped skin.

As the necessities of the settlers in the northern districts increase, and force them to seek for labour at all hazards, even to a desire for the renewal of transportation to their shores, they may make an attempt to employ the natives at equitable wages—a system which has not been adhered to in their dealings with them hitherto—and thereby save some remnant of these interesting people; while the world would learn that the character of our countrymen for humanity is not dormant at the antipodes. Already the experiment has been successfully tried in Victoria, since the absorption of white labour by the gold-diggings; and they have proved themselves *useful labourers* at *remunerative wages*. So generally have they been employed by the settlers

in that province, that the Aboriginal Protectorate Establishment, instituted there by the Government from the foundation of the colony, has been broken up, as no longer necessary. This is just as it should be, where the children of the soil are benefited by the riches of their mother earth. Heretofore the poor black fellow has been refused the due reward for his work by the colonist; and people have been surprised at their extreme idleness, in the midst of a great demand for labour. If they would only reflect on the condition of the Irishman, who becomes reckless of himself, and is the slave of idleness, in his native land, where his best energies only earn a miserable pittance for his subsistence; but when removed to a country like Australia or America, where he is amply remunerated for his toil, he turns out an industrious member of society, they would not despair of making the black fellow a useful man by liberal treatment, and paying him fair wages for a fair day's work.

Acting upon this principle during our wanderings through the Australian wilderness, even beyond the confines of civilisation, where the untutored savage has for the first time beheld a white man in our person, and during periods of six and eight months at a time, when we have lived alone attended by two or three of those wild retainers, we have always found them willing to perform any office within reach of their capacity, if reasonably rewarded for their labour, and that reward faithfully discharged according to the promise made them beforehand. While we have known that the causes of several murders and robberies committed by them upon the settlers have been from ill-requited services and the promptings of revenge, where the white man has unjustly obtained their labour, under promises of reward which he did not fulfil. In making these remarks, we do not wish to prejudice the reader against the settlers for their treatment of the natives generally; for they have had much to contend with in clearing the way for civilisation; neither do we agree with the maudlin sentimentalism put forth by well-meaning but inexperienced enthusiasts, regarding them in this country; but simply to record the fact, from our own conviction, and long experience amongst them, that these children of

nature, admitted to be among the lowest beings in the social scale of the human family, have a clear perception of justice, not only between man and man in their dealings, but in resisting oppression, where the strong and powerful white man has endeavoured to take advantage of their weakness.

Moreton Bay, the Port Philip of the northern districts, at its navigable entrance is not far short of five hundred miles by sea from Sydney. Next to that noble sheet of water, it is the largest harbour in all Australia, and extends from north to south the entire space between the parallels of 27° and 28° of latitude, and varying from east to west between three miles and twenty miles across, giving an approximate average width of twelve miles, by sixty miles in length. This long and narrow bay is formed by Moreton Island and Stradbroke Island, two islands equally long and narrow, covered with drift sand, which trend due north and south, while the coast on the mainland diverges to the north-west, the bay lying between; consequently there are three entrances to it from the Pacific Ocean. From the south it is only a small-boat passage; and the entrance between the two islands has been abandoned on account of a dangerous bar which crosses it; but the northern entrance is a safe, wide, and deep channel for vessels of the largest burden.

This spacious estuary has numerous rivers flowing into it, four of them being navigable streams for twenty and fifty miles, viz. the Brisbane, Logan, Tweed, and Scott. The former, which is of the greatest magnitude, disembogues itself into the bay on the western shore, opposite the middle entrance; and on its banks, about sixteen miles from its mouth, are situated the townships of North and South Brisbane. The site upon which North Brisbane stands is an elevated tongue of land, around which the river takes a considerable bend, and commands a picturesque view of the surrounding country. This town was laid out and built nearly twenty years ago, when Moreton Bay was a penal settlement. History blushes to record the doings of the governors and the governed in those days. The present dilapidated condition of the prisoners' barracks, gaol, and government cottages, with an old wind-

mill, give the place a dismal and deserted air, especially when the visitor associates them with the records of the past. South Brisbane, on the opposite bank of the river, has been built since the district was opened up to free settlers in 1841; it is a thriving village, but unfortunately it stands upon low ground, which is partly inundated by the river when it overflows its banks during the rainy season. Here the Australian Steam Navigation Company have erected large warehouses, and constructed a good wharf for the accommodation of their steamboats, which carry the great bulk of the produce and passengers from the district to Sydney. The river at this spot is a noble deep-flowing fresh-water stream, nearly a thousand feet in width, and deep enough to float a man-of-war. It is navigable for forty miles higher up, where it receives the waters of the Bremer River, a considerable tributary coming from the south, where the tide flows five miles above the junction. At this spot, where navigation ceases, is situated the rapidly increasing town of Ipswich; from whence the squatters on the extensive district of Darling Downs receive their supplies, and send their produce for shipment. A small steamboat plies between this township and South Brisbane daily.

We know of no river in all the Australian colonies which presents more of those advantageous features which a navigable stream should possess for opening up the resources of the country through which it flows, than the Brisbane River. The richest alluvial soil covers its banks, and the climate is peculiarly qualified for producing all the vegetable productions common to tropical countries. Here the traveller from India will be gratified to see the banana, the mango, the guava, and pine-apple, growing in the open air. The latter fruit we have seen in a kitchen-garden plot at a friend's station, planted like rows of cabbages, and as commonly eaten. At the same time the orange-tree and the vine do not produce such good fruit as in the south: however, we doubt not that if the settlers on the higher lands in the interior were to plant the vine, it would produce a grape capable of furnishing a good wine. The same disadvantage applies to the production of wheat, which rots before it comes into ear on the moist lands around the bay,

but has been satisfactorily grown on the elevated downs and table-land in the interior.

These northern districts also possess, or rather, as time rolls on and the colony continues prosperous, will possess, advantages over the south in being adapted for the cultivation of cotton, coffee, sugar, rice, tobacco, and all other valuable articles of general consumption, the produce of a warm climate and rich soil. Already experimental plantations of these commodities have been successfully cultivated at Eagle Farm on the Brisbane River, as far back as 1840, by Dr. Simpson, the commissioner of crown lands for the Moreton Bay district; and the first of them, of which so much has been said, was seen growing by one of the authors of this book in a settler's garden on the same river seven years ago, which produced a good sample of cotton. Indeed it is far from being a new discovery that these northern districts are adapted for the growth of cotton; for, if we are not mistaken, the cotton-plant was cultivated successfully in the government garden at North Brisbane in the early days of the settlement, eighteen years ago. The great drawback to the further development of these resources has been, and still is, the want of labour; and we are of opinion that to produce such articles as cotton, coffee, sugar, and rice profitably, you must have not only a cheap and abundant supply of labour, but it must be of that description where the labourers have been accustomed to carry on field operations under a tropical sun.

The present dearth of ordinary labour throughout these colonies is more severely felt in the northern than in the southern and western districts; for the gold-discoveries in the latter have drained away the labouring class of people from the former to such an extent that a portion of the colonists are petitioning for convict labour. There is every likelihood, however, of a reaction in favour of the northern districts, should the late discoveries of gold at Bingara, and the Agricultural Company's land on the Peel River, be followed up by successful "prospecting" parties further north. And it is reasonable to suppose that the main range at Moreton Bay possesses its share of the gold-deposits, as well as the southern portion of the cordillera. If quartz indicates the existence of gold in its vicinity, there is abun-

dance of it in the northern districts; and we should not be surprised to hear soon that rich veins had been found at North Brisbane, for the town is built upon quartz-rock and mineral quartz-veins. Altogether the northern districts of New South Wales have nothing to fear on a comparison with the southern districts; both have resources which may be worked to their mutual advantage. And as the colonists and the government manage this new source of wealth, so will their adopted country, and the most promising colonial possessions of the crown, be benefited or injured. Having on several occasions throughout the foregoing chapters submitted our humble opinions to the reader on this all-important subject, we will not say more than repeat, that it is our hope, that these successful colonists, in their love for gold, will not be induced entirely to neglect the advancement of agricultural operations and mechanical pursuits, without which no community can reach that noble position of self-dependence which is necessary for the maintenance of a free and industrious people.

CHAPTER XXI.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF AUSTRALIA.

Statistics of New South Wales and Victoria from 1830 to 1851—Estimated value of the products of gold in Victoria for 1852—What will be the returns for 1872?—Internal resources of Australia—Their development in New South Wales during the past 20 years—Establishment of manufactories—Political and social condition of the people—Symptoms of a state of anarchy in Victoria—Rumoured resignation of Lieutenant-Governor Latrobe—Pusillanimous conduct of the government—Hospitality departing—The old colonists equal to the emergency—Indomitable energies of a squatter and an editor—Remarks upon the state of society in New South Wales—Security of person and property while travelling—Civility and hospitality even from the despised convict—Political aspect of these colonies—Their right to be represented in Parliament—Principles suggested for the consideration of the Government in "Britain and her Dependencies"—The British Parliament and Ministry should take warning by the past—A great future in store for Australia and the Australians.

In order to complete our account of these colonies and the resources of the territory through which our descriptive narration purports to conduct the reader, let us consider the present commercial prosperity of the colonists, and take a retrospective view of the progress they have made during the past twenty years; and from such data speculate upon the future prospects of Australia.

At that period the inhabited portion of the colony of New South Wales was limited to the nineteen counties which the reader will find distinguished on the annexed map by a red tint. The total population in the year 1830, as near as can be ascertained, was about 55,000. The value of the imports into the colony during that year was 420,480*l.*; and the exports, consisting almost entirely of wool, was 141,461*l.*; shewing, in round numbers, a consumption of foreign commodities at the rate of 7*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

per head of population; while they produced for exportation not more than 2*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* per head; a balance of trade against the colony equal to 200 per cent,—this large deficit being met by the government expenditure.

In the interval between that date and the close of the year 1851, up to the period of our revisiting Australia, the colony of New South Wales has become inhabited to the full extent of its original boundaries, four times the area of the nineteen counties; and the southern section, formerly known as the district of Port Philip, has been erected into a separate province under the well-known title of Victoria, which we have defined on the annexed map by a blue line. By natural increase and free immigration, the population of this territory at that date was, in New South Wales proper 197,168 persons, and in Victoria about 82,000; shewing a total of 279,168 in 1851 against 55,000 in 1830, having increased fivefold during the space of 21 years. In 1851 the value of the imports into New South Wales was 1,563,931*l.*, and into the new colony of Victoria 1,056,000*l.*, giving a total amount of imports within the original boundaries of the old colony of 2,619,931*l.*; while the exports in the same year were respectively 1,796,952*l.* and 1,423,000*l.*; a total of 3,219,952*l.* So that the amount of imports for the old settlement in 1851, for every man, woman, and child, would be at the rate of about 8*l.* a-head, and of exports about 9*l.* a-head; and for the new province at the rate of 13*l.* a-head for imports, and upwards of 17*l.* a-head for exports. These averages—which we need not state are unequalled by any other community in the world—exhibit a total amount of external trade amongst a population of 279,168 persons of 5,839,883*l.*, scattered over the same territory, where, twenty-one years before, the total external trade of 55,000 people was not more than 561,941*l.* While the population has increased fivefold, the external trade has augmented tenfold.

It must be remembered that these statistical returns were computed at a period when the gold-deposits had only been worked six months in New South Wales, and scarcely three months in Victoria; consequently the value of the precious metal entered on the export-sheet of either colony forms a small item in the total amount. Since that period

the first year of the gold era has passed away, and the astounding discoveries and labours of the gold-diggers have added almost a fabulous amount to the products of the two colonies under consideration. We are in possession of intelligence as late as the end of November 1852, which warrants us in stating that the amount of exports from New South Wales for that year will be more than treble that of 1851; and the total amount of gold raised in Victoria will more than be quadruple the amount of exports for the previous year; while the addition to the population of the two colonies cannot be less than 100,000. And should the yield of gold from the Victoria diggings during the latter months of the past year continue, when sixty thousand diggers were said to be procuring, at a low average, an ounce per week each man—we shall have, at a reasonable computation, during the second year of the gold-discovery, in this colony alone, a sum not less than 20 millions sterling added to its productive resources. Therefore, granting that the population of the previous year be doubled, and all the gold exported—which is very probable—this will give on an average to each individual the power of consuming, for that year, *one hundred pounds* value of foreign commodities. At such a climax our sober statistical calculations are startled from their propriety; and we leave the reader to speculate upon the probable returns from the custom-house and the registrar-general's office in Victoria for 1872.

Besides this increase in the amount of its external trade during the last twenty years, this territory has shewn equally surprising results as to its capability of producing, to almost an unlimited extent, every article of luxury or necessity for the support and comfort of the most civilised communities in the family of mankind. Australia is just such a country as Napoleon *le grand* desired to rule over, so that he could work out his gigantic schemes of national aggrandisement. Here, under its extraordinary variety of climate, from Cape York in 11° south latitude to Van Diemen's Land in 43°, every description of vegetable food can be produced, from the pine-apple to the potato, from the sugar-cane to mangel-wurzel; and the raw materials for clothing can be reared, from the finest silk to the coarsest wool. Its min-

eral treasures are likewise unlimited, from coal-measures to gold and diamond mines. It is needless to pursue these details farther; it is evident that by developing her internal resources, Australia as a nation could be independent of all foreign aid in supplying every necessary and luxury for the maintenance of her people. The stride these two colonies have made in this respect during the past twenty years is ample proof of this; and although the gold-discovery has checked the progress of her enterprising manufacturers, still these resources are only dormant for a time, doubtless to be again resumed with tenfold energy; and the wealth acquired by this universal circulating medium will develop new products hitherto unknown. In 1830, excepting a few windmills at Sydney, there was scarcely any thing in the shape of machinery for manufactures in New South Wales. In 1850, besides a hundred mills of various kinds for grinding and dressing grain, there were 95 tallow-melting establishments, which boiled down half a million of sheep and 50,000 head of cattle that year. And of manufactories —5 distilleries, 24 breweries, 3 sugar-refining, 20 soap and candle, 15 tobacco and snuff, 6 woollen cloth (producing annually 200,000 yards of tweed and broad-cloth,) 4 hat, 4 rope, 40 tanneries, 5 salting and preserving meat establishments, 1 gas-works, 7 potteries, 1 glass-works, 1 smelting-works, 13 iron and brass foundries. With this list of useful works to train up the rising generation of colonists in the noble arts and manufactures of the parent country, we have no fear but there will be a gradual increase in the industrial pursuits of these colonies during the next twenty years, commensurate with the increased value of their products.

So much for the development of its material prosperity during the past, and the brilliant hopes of the future. While we have an equally satisfactory result in the increase of the population and the character of the people during that time, let us endeavour to see what looms on the social and political horizon of Australia since the advent of this golden era in her history. We have stated that the population had increased from 55,000 to 280,000 during that period within the boundaries of the old colony of New South Wales. We may add further, that the

major part of the former population consisted of prisoners of the crown or emancipated convicts, and that the sexes were unnaturally disproportioned; while among the latter there were nineteen-twentieths of them free people, with an approximation towards an equality of the sexes; and the relations of society between master and servant were much the same as they are now in the mother country. So far, then, the social condition of the community had kept pace in improvement with the march of its material prosperity. The sudden discovery, however, of almost illimitable wealth has thrown the social progress of the colonists as far back in the scale of nations as they have advanced in commercial importance; and for the time being the relations which formerly subsisted between the employer and the employed have been subverted. Those ties which bind the industrious energies of the labourer and capitalist no longer prevail. Under this new order of things a universal equality has established itself amongst the great mass of the people; and those who are for order and good government are fearful that a state of anarchy will ensue from this dissevering, as it were, the old bonds of society under which the colonies prospered.

Already it has begun to shew itself in the province of Victoria, where the desperadoes and scum of all the colonies seem to have congregated. We have it from an eye-witness, who left Melbourne in November 1852, and to whose testimony, as an old colonist, we attach much consideration, that the lawlessness which prevailed at that time throughout that once peaceful colony was grievous to record. The offscourings of Van Diemen's Land were roaming about, committing robberies and murders almost unchecked; while the pusillanimous conduct of the local government, who had publicly declared their *inability to conduct the administration of affairs*, was reprehended by every right-thinking independent colonist. And it was rumoured that the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Latrobe, conscious of his unfitness to manage the helm of the state, had sent in his resignation to the home government. We have no intention of saying any thing disrespectful of Mr. Latrobe when we state, that under the circumstances he was not only unequal to the emergency, but he was behind

the intelligent body of the colonists, who shewed themselves able for the occasion. The narrow-mindedness, to say the least of it, which he has displayed in grasping at the money which flowed so freely into the treasury, without a liberal and equivalent expenditure in maintaining a body of police for the suppression of crime, exhibits a policy entirely at variance with the British constitution. It is so contrary to the policy of imperial administrations, who launch out millions of British money for the maintenance of order in our possessions in Africa, India, and New Zealand, that we should imagine the present business Ministry will accept his resignation, and dispatch some able and active man to the scene of anarchy, armed with full powers, and an efficient executive, to make these desperadoes feel that they are under the sway of the British sceptre, and thereby preserve the lustre of this brightest jewel in England's diadem.

Besides this change in the former peaceful condition of the people, another and a grievous alteration has taken place in the friendly demeanour of the colonists in Victoria. The selfish lust for gold, and the influx of strangers among the people, has banished much of that hospitable feeling from the mass of society which formerly prevailed among the colonists; a feeling which was nowhere more liberally manifested than among the early residents in Port Philip. We regret this exceedingly; for it spread a charm over the rough welcomings which the colonist held forth to the stranger, that all the treasures of the gold-fields cannot supply, and which formerly reconciled the emigrant for the loss he sustained in leaving the friends of his youth behind.

Reverting from this gloomy aspect of affairs, let us glance at the bright side of the picture. Although we did not deem it our province in the foregoing narrative to touch in detail upon the early history of these colonies, and enter more minutely into the social and political condition of the people, still we have endeavoured throughout to describe only those phases of individual character, and the general characteristics of the colonists in their every-day life, which are based upon the broad principles of human nature, and which even the revolution in society created by the gold-

discovery cannot alter, however much it may modify. Our aim has been to sketch the existing condition of these colonies, with a view to represent the leading features of Australian life and scenery, so that there can be no mistake in recognising the picture. And we flatter ourselves that the traveller who journeys with our book in his hand over the same ground ten or even twenty years hence, will find our descriptions and remarks true to the life within their sphere, however great the circle may be augmented. In our remarks upon the existing state of society, we have as fearlessly canvassed the past and present as we have hopefully adverted to the future. And we trust that the reader has been agreeably surprised to learn, probably for the first time, from our honest-written words, that there is more of refinement and high-minded intelligence amongst our fellow-subjects at the antipodes than he was aware of. And as facts in the history of Australia prove that individual enterprise has been the mainspring in developing the resources of the country, so, without boasting, the Australian colonists may take credit to themselves as a community, who can stand under any difficulties which may befal them, that they are quite equal to meet the present emergency, if their rulers could but enforce authority. Two instances within the circle of our personal friends in Victoria will serve to illustrate the indomitable spirit which prevails amongst them.

A squatter possessed of 26,000 sheep, which formerly required about thirty men to superintend, finds himself suddenly deserted by all hands, excepting three faithful servants. What does he do in this predicament, when his flocks are apparently threatened with ruin? He does not sit down and idly bemoan his fate, and allow his sheep to stray into the wilderness, but instantly arouses himself, and strains all his energies to encounter the difficulty; he drives the whole of his sheep into one spot, and with the aid of his three trusty adherents, shepherds this monster flock on horseback, taking the full sweep of his run for their feeding-ground. Again, our old friend the editor of the *Melbourne Argus* one day finds that all his assistants have "sloped off to the diggings," and he is left alone with some lads to bring out his daily sheet of news. What does

he do? Sit down in his editorial chair and indite a hand-bill to announce that, in consequence of being short-handed, his paper cannot appear on the morrow? No such thing. He at once unflinchingly applies himself to assist the few who remain in the task of composing and printing, and sends forth his broadsheet to the expectant inhabitants not a whit less respectably "got up" than usual, and detailing his case in his usual racy, good-humoured way. These are the methods by which our fellow-subjects in Australia meet their difficulties in the face; and the man who is not equal to these occasions need not expect to progress in such a go-ahead community.

With regard to the general state of society in New South Wales in particular, we have a little more to say; for we are confident that there is less alteration upon the people of that colony than in the younger community of Victoria. We think that persons must have been very unfortunate in their association if they did not meet with respectable people in Sydney. It would not only be unjust, but it would be absurd, not to say that there is as good society in New South Wales as there is in any other community; and those persons who have spoken against it probably would have a difficulty in explaining their exact position in their own country. No doubt in all communities there are objectionable characters; New South Wales has therefore, in this respect, nothing peculiar to itself. It was our good fortune not only to avoid coming in contact with disagreeable people there, but, on the contrary, to make some valued and respected friends; and we should feel that we were doing them and ourselves an injustice, if we did not acknowledge their many kindnesses to us, and express our opinion that there exists amongst the society of that colony all those refinements which men value from the charm which they give to life.

As to insecurity of the person, we can but give our experiences. We have travelled, as the reader will conclude, over many thousand miles of that territory; we have often bivouacked alone, and we have taken our chance with the solitary shepherd; and we were always treated with kindness and civility, often with a liberal hospitality. The fact of our being alone frequently, and consequently

exposed, while we were never once either insulted or made uneasy, should be a proof to people that travelling in New South Wales was as safe as in England. What the future may produce we are not prepared to say; we speak of our own experiences, without exaggeration one way or the other. Nay, we may add, what will perhaps surprise many persons, that we have met with the greatest civility (often in awkward and solitary places) from that class who have been exposed to much unfair abuse by those whose fortunes have, in most instances, been made by, or may be traced to their labours; we allude to the emancipated convict population of New South Wales. To be continually pluming oneself upon one's own virtue, and eternally casting reflections upon those who have been unfortunate, or—if people please—criminal, is not only unjust, but ungenerous. The rule should be to judge them by their present acts and general credit for years of good conduct, which these men almost invariably can shew, and not to trouble yourself further. At any rate, avoid hurting the feelings of men when they have paid the penalty demanded of them by their country.

If we step from the social threshold of the people of Australia into the public arena of their political condition, the same unsettled difficulties meet us on the way. We are none of those wise politicians who can see further into the millstone of futurity than other people; at the same time, we venture to say, that the adjustment of affairs under the new development of the riches of Australia will press on the consideration of English statesmen the position of the mother country in relation to these colonies. Heretofore they have been viewed as *belonging to England;* now they will have to be considered as an *integral portion of the British empire.* To make them such, they must be represented in the Imperial Parliament for empire objects. The importance of conceding to the colonists the rights of Englishmen in managing their local affairs has been at length admitted. But it has escaped observation, that unless our dependencies are linked to the empire by sending deputies to the parliament for imperial objects, this concession in itself will be, in fact, giving to them the next thing to their independence. Antagonism must arise be-

tween the distant colony and the mother country in consequence; whereas representation in the Imperial Parliament would bind them to the state from whence they derive their importance in the family of nations, and tend to make the union of the empire perfect.

"Taking this general view of the subject, we proposed, as far back as 1839, that every colony of Englishmen possessing a British population of a given number should have the privilege of returning to the House of Commons deputies to represent their general interests in that house; and that absolute local legislative control should be accorded to every colony reaching a certain population, for local purposes.

"That every individual possessing the requisite qualification for a member of the Imperial Legislature should be entitled to take his seat in the House of Commons, provided he should be elected by at least two-thirds of the Colonial Legislature for that purpose; and also that any individual in any of our colonies, provided he possess the requisite qualification, shall be eligible to represent any given constituency in any part of Great Britain and Ireland in the British House of Commons.

"In return for this equitable concession, it is contended that all colonies, after twenty years' location, should bear their quota of any charge incurred for the defence of the empire in any future war, according to a population scale; each colony to raise the same through her own local legislature. There never was a greater error, nor a more mischievous statement, than that colonists are reluctant to bear an *equitable* share of our national war-burdens; Englishmen are naturally as ready to consent to that which is fair and equal, as they are prone to resist injustice. This spirit of equity is the strength of the empire; and as such it ought to be carefully cherished.

"Again, members to sit in Parliament should be elected for a fixed period of three, five, or seven years, as might be agreed upon, and not to be determined by any change in the Imperial Parliament; those members to be chosen by at least two-thirds of the local legislature. This mode would be preferable to having the members chosen by the people at large, as it would prevent a difference of

opinion between the members sent to the Imperial Parliament and the Colonial Legislature. Upon the dissolution of the Imperial Parliament, of course, the functions of the colonial members to be in abeyance until a new parliament was assembled. An objection may be made to this proposal, that it would be against the constitution: in answer to which, we may challenge the objector to point out in what respect it is against the constitution, any more than it is to appoint a member of the Upper House of Parliament as a permanent legislator. In this respect we may aptly view our constitution as a scheme of government which accommodates itself to the peace and happiness of the people at large, and as the power and extension of the empire may demand. Such rights conceded to our fellow-subjects in the colonies would make it their interest to continue attached to the mother country. Every community possesses ambitious men, who are either useful or mischievous to the state; useful if secured in the enjoyment of their birthright; mischievous if deprived of it. These men in the colonies being eligible to fill the highest offices of the state, would there exercise their talents in a right direction; and they would no longer feel themselves in a degraded position, but that they enjoyed all the immunities of free-born Englishmen, while they would be considered by the British public as part of themselves. The nation would also have the benefit of hearing the opinions of men really conversant with colonial questions; men who would possess the confidence of at least two-thirds of their local house of representatives, and of a large majority of the colonists. In the event of war, the most remote of our possessions would be as enthusiastic for the national honour and for the interests of the empire as the people of the fatherland. They would consider the British Isles to be their common country; while the colonies would offer an outlet for the superabundant population, where they could enjoy, without restraint, the privileges of their national institutions.

"Men born in this country, after taking root in our colonies, possess the love of fatherland in no ordinary degree, until the unwise policy of the rulers at home chills their feelings; their sons, consequently, display cooler re-

gards towards the mother country; and their sons' sons approach to absolute indifference, if not aversion.

"Before the troubles broke out in Spanish America, in the early part of the present century, the plan of a constitution was laid before the Cortes by patriotic men in the colonies; the leading principle of which was to enable the colonists to be possessed of all and every privilege enjoyed by their fellow-countrymen in Spain; and also to grant them the right to choose deputies from amongst their own body to represent their interests in the Imperial Cortes. The plan was not adopted; and those fatal consequences, which need not be specified, occurred; and have scarcely left one colony to that once-splendid empire, which, in earlier periods, was the wonder and admiration of the world.

"Let us be warned, both by our own experience and by the experience of others; and let that which constitutes the perfection of friendship be made manifest upon the most extensive scale,—namely, '*that a great many generals be made into one.*'"*

Here then, gentle reader, we must bring our remarks on the past condition and future prospects of Australia to a close. And as it has been our aim throughout these pages to entertain as well as to instruct you in our descriptive narrative and free remarks on these most important possessions of the British Crown and our fellow-countrymen, who are working out the destinies of Australia, we trust that our intention in your case has proved successful. Imperfect as the foregoing sketch of the undeveloped resources of these regions has been, there is enough to shew that a great future is in store for the colonists and their posterity in the lands of Australia. This is no doubtful conjecture, seen in the dim obscurity of future ages, but it is becoming every day more and more a bright and palpable fact; not merely in the giant strides of present progress, when every man's footstep marks its imprint on *sands of gold*, but in the position which Australia will doubtless maintain from her superior wealth and unbounded resources among the foreign states which now flourish, and

* "Britain and her Dependencies, and their Right to be represented in Parliament." By Thomas Banister, of the Inner Temple.

others which are likely to spring into existence on the eastern shores of the mighty Pacific. The opening-up of this vast ocean to the traffic of the northern nations will form the grand achievement of the age, as the navigation of the Atlantic was that of our ancestors three centuries ago. Already the crushing, resistless momentum of steam-power has shortened the chain which links the mother country with her antipodes by one-third; and it will soon sever the slender neck of land which divides the two oceans, and thus open up an entrance to that boundless western sea, which laves alike the gold-coasts of America and Australia. Is there not, therefore, at the present, reasonable grounds for predicting a great future for Australia and the Australians? The same energies and sinews are at work which raised the mighty fabric of the American nation to its present eminence. Say, then, are we less vigorous in frame, or less gigantic in mind, than our forefathers were? What they performed on the western shores of the Atlantic, may not this present generation of Britons and their descendants achieve upon the western shore of the Pacific?

CHAPTER XXII.

CAUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

The labourer and mechanic cannot go wrong in emigrating—Families unaccustomed to hard labour often meet with disappointment—Career of dissolute young men—Caution to parents and guardians—Non-workers at a discount; manual labour at a premium—Advice to married men—Our suggestions to two intending gold-seekers—Useful memoranda for the diggings—A limited field for the learned professions—Doctors in the towns and at the diggings—Barristers and attorneys at bar and chamber practice—Clergymen and teachers—Official reformation wanted in the government of the colonies—The safest method of transmitting money.

In conclusion: the remarks freely scattered throughout the foregoing pages, commenting upon the progress and vicissitudes of colonial life in New South Wales and Victoria, will be rendered more useful and intelligible to the intending colonist, if we append a few practical observations upon the propriety of his using great caution and judgment in resolving to venture his fortunes on that distant shore, and leaving what prospects are before him in his native country. Of course we do not allude to the emigrant labourer and mechanic, whom we distinctly assure cannot make a false step in proceeding thither under any circumstances. It is the family with limited means, and unaccustomed to hard labour, who require some cautions and prudent advice; and likewise young men of dissolute habits in the upper walks of society, who promise repentance to their parents and guardians if they are assisted to reach this new field of enterprise.

"Amongst the former we have witnessed much misery and distress, where the thriving tradesman has left a comparatively flourishing business, and the comfortably situated office-man has given up an easy appointment and fair

salary, for visions of wealth and independence never to be realised. And sad indeed have been the regrets of such individuals when they found that they had thrown up a reasonable certainty for a visionary uncertainty. The idea of amassing a fortune by a few years' hard toil and privation, and returning to one's native country to enjoy it, is no doubt a very delightful result to one's labours; but such prizes are few compared with the many who are only capable of earning a living. To all such enthusiasts we earnestly say, be cautious, particularly if you are surrounded by a young family and a delicate wife; abandon all Utopian schemes, and think of your emigrating—of becoming a good colonist, as simply transplanting your energies and means to a more profitable and genial soil, at the same time requiring more than usual exertion and sacrifice to discover its capabilities. Suppose, in no pursuit you undertake, that wealth can be obtained but by the same application, the same perseverance, the same integrity that lead to success in this country, and you will not be disappointed.

"With regard to young men of dissolute habits, we have frequently been consulted by anxious parents on the propriety of disposing of them, in something like the following terms: 'Here is our son Tom, a wild youth, who will not settle down quietly to business; he has lost several advantageous situations through his unsteadiness of conduct. He is now approaching his majority, and we are anxious to see him begin the business of the world in earnest. This he promises faithfully to do, if we only pay his passage out to Australia, provide him with an ample outfit, and a hundred pounds or so in his pocket when he lands there. We are inclined to think favourably of the project, and solicit your advice as to the most advantageous settlement for him to proceed to.' Our advice in the majority of cases has been such as to dissuade the parents from forwarding his views, as it would be tossing him out of the frying-pan into the fire.

"Parents who have complied with such requests, during the past history of Australian and New Zealand emigration, have had much to regret in the consequences which have ensued. It can be termed nothing short of family

banishment, and is fraught with many evils, not only to the young men themselves, but to the community they proceed to. The 'fast' youth, upon reaching the land of his adoption with a little money in his purse, and finding himself freed from the vigilant eyes of his friends and relatives, launches recklessly into all manner of excesses, until he is ruined in health and pocket. The consequences are most distressing where the man is not 'a law unto himself.' No matter how superior his attainments if this precept is unheeded, and the grosser passions predominate. In our experiences, both in New Zealand and Australia, we have witnessed many distressing cases, where graduates of our universities—Cambridge and Oxford men—have become victims to their dissolute recklessness, all the more quickly because in those colonies there was no check on their conduct. After squandering the means intended for their moral redemption in some new sphere of action—frequently a portion of the savings from the hard-won earnings of an industrious parent—we have encountered them in the bush of Australia reduced to the condition of the common labourer, sometimes even following a menial occupation; and, in New Zealand, living in domestic savageness upon the charity of the Maori chiefs. It is true that the families of such scapegrace sons and brothers have got rid of a bad member of their households; for they are at such a distance, that they find it a difficult matter to return. This is but poor recompense for the degradation their name sustains, and the abandonment of the prodigal son, probably for life. If young men must 'sow their wild oats,' at all events let it be under paternal surveillance, for then they may reap some profitable lessons; whereas the harvest of their mature years may be disgrace and infamy on these distant shores. The recent changes in the social condition of these colonies, instead of presenting an improved field for their reception, exhibits the contrary; for gold-digging and its associations are not likely to reform the characters of young and dissolute adventurers."*

As regards the steadier class of young men holding respectable positions in society, such as merchants', bankers',

* "The Gold Regions of Australia." By Samuel Mossman.

and lawyers' clerks, shopmen and the like, we trust that the repeated warnings of their disappointed fellow-clerks who have already reached these shores, and found themselves mistaken, will be sufficient to deter others from risking their unskilled and feeble arms in a community where bodily strength and mechanical talent are the only *desiderata*. Cases of actual distress have already been reported from Melbourne, where young men of this class have been unable to earn sufficient means at any employment in that city to meet the enormously increased expenses of living there; while burly bullock-drivers, water and wood-carriers, and the like, live on the fat of the land from the proceeds of their rude occupations.

If a person of this class has no intention of going to the diggings, and he is a married man, we should say, supposing that he possesses some means, that the best thing for him to do, is to get himself under cover at as little expense as possible, without caring for appearances; to be economical in his living, and immediately to set about taking steps for the future. If he is not a man to hire himself, he must determine his course without delay; and he must never forget that every pound spent is a pound lost to him, ay and more, perhaps at some future day it might increase to fifty. If he means to go to the diggings, he must resolve to work hard and suffer privations cheerfully, determined not to be beaten in his object. His success, certainly, may depend upon Fortune; but that lady at the diggings generally bestows her favours upon those who can wash out most cart-loads of earth in a day.

A short time since two young gentlemen called upon us for information as to how they should proceed on their arrival in the colonies, as they had resolved upon going to the mines. Their means were very limited; but they had stout hearts, with strong and active frames, although not accustomed to labour. We said, after telling them the description of outfit necessary for such an enterprise, that we should recommend them, *as a matter of pleasure*, to be always ready on board ship to make themselves useful in hauling at the ropes, assisting at the pumps, and such like; for as, upon their arrival, they would have to work in earnest, it would be well for them to be in good working

condition, both body and hands. If they made up their minds to pursue this course, and were really determined to labour hard, we thought, from their appearance, that they had a fair chance of succeeding; but we had made it a rule not to offer a specific piece of advice to any one going to these colonies; for experience had taught us, that success depended entirely on the individual himself; and frequently we had known, when the adventurer failed, he would attach blame to his adviser. They said, "We understand you perfectly. You think if it is in us to bear hardships, to persevere under privations, whatever they may be, and if we possess wit enough to avail ourselves of the chances which may cross our path, we shall succeed." "Exactly so," was our reply. And we have no doubt but that those young men, if they turn out what they appeared to be, will be among Fortune's favourites.

As it may prove useful to those intending gold-diggers bound for Mount Alexander, we shall copy the following memorandum for their guidance, under the existing regulations, from the *Melbourne Herald*.

1. Every licensed person must have his license always with him, ready to be produced whenever demanded by a commissioner, or persons acting under his instructions, otherwise he is liable to be proceeded against as an unlicensed person.

2. Every person digging for gold, or occupying land, without a license, is liable by law to be fined: for a first offence not exceeding 5*l.*; for a second offence not exceeding 15*l.*; and for a subsequent one not exceeding 20*l.*

3. Digging for gold is not allowed within 16 feet of the edge of any public road, nor are the roads to be undermined.

4. Tents and buildings are not to be erected within 20 feet of each other, or within 20 feet of any creek.

5. It is enjoined that all persons at the gold-fields maintain and assist in maintaining a due observance of the Sundays. A gold-license is not transferable.

In reference to a question frequently asked by newcomers, it may be mentioned that each license continues in force until the first of each month only, whether you take out one at the beginning or the middle of the month.

In a labouring community like that which inhabits Australia, where the occupations of the people are almost solely directed to producing the *raw materials* for manufactures, it will be readily supposed by the intelligent reader that individuals skilled in the higher mechanical arts are less likely to find remunerative employment than the unskilled labourer, or at all events the demand for the former is easier supplied than the latter; hence there are fewer inducements for them to emigrate, should they intend following their trades. Not only is this the case with the skilful artisan, but members of the learned professions will find but a limited sphere for the exercise of their collegiate acquirements. The physician will not find great scope for his therapeutic talent in that healthy climate, except in attending upon invalids who have been recommended to take up their residence there. His greatest practice in the towns will be in facilitating the entrance into the world of the future and vastly increasing population of Anglo-Australians. Few surgical cases occur among the agricultural and pastoral labouring classes, from the quiet nature of their occupations; and as they are scattered thinly over the vast interior, they seldom call in the services of a regular practitioner, unless the case be of a serious nature. The distance they have to send or travel for advice is generally so great, that they either allow their ailments to take the natural course of recovery, or they obtain a dose of medicine from the medicine-chest which is to be found upon all well-regulated stations. In fact, taking the census of the people into consideration, Australia requires fewer medical men to prescribe for the community, less bleeding and blistering for her children in these southern colonies, than in any other country in the world situated so near the tropical zone. We have no doubt, however, that a skilful physician, with a knowledge of the latest discoveries in his profession, may find a practice in some of the cities and largest towns, as brother professionals very soon retire from active business, as soon as they acquire a sufficiency to commence some easier and more lucrative pursuit. The best opening perhaps, in these gold-digging times, is that before the hardy country surgeon at or near some of the gold-fields, if he is able to stand the hardships

and privations of a bush life. This new occupation has increased the amount of medical cases beyond all precedent, and the doctors (?) at the mines are picking up a golden harvest among the miners who have been so fortunate as to come off with a few scars only, or an impaired constitution, without having dug their graves in these auriferous caverns and wells. Students who have just graduated, and assistants, who intend leaving the pestle and mortar on speculation, should remember that this new demand for medical attendance very probably is supplied by this time; and as more clerks and shopmen have proceeded to these gold colonies during the past year than would suffice for the bookkeeping and counter-jumping in towns with ten times the population, so perhaps the expectant apothecary may find himself a *drug* in the market, even amongst the miners. At all events, a good supply of those medicines required in the cure of dysentery, ophthalmia, and similar complaints, it is indispensable to take with him.

To gentlemen of the legal profession who have read these pages with care, it must have occurred that such a community have not much time for litigation; hence there are not many fat fees going in civil cases. But the increased desire of the lucky diggers to invest their earnings in real property has multiplied the business of conveyancing; so that a lawyer well versed in this department of his profession will find a good opening for his talents. English law is practised at the bar; and a barrister gifted with ordinary forensic eloquence may find a remunerative opening for his talents in the supreme courts of Sydney or Melbourne; or if he be skilled in chamber practice, he may pick up some good fees. An attorney has more chances of working his way into a profitable business than a barrister, there being a great many petty courts throughout these colonies, in which he can practice in either capacity. Under all circumstances, we would caution legal gentlemen from proceeding thither upon speculation, unless they are high-class men; inferior lawyers in either capacity have as little chance of a brief or a case, once they are known, as they would have in England.

Ministers of the gospel, of course, almost never think of proceeding to these distant regions without being invited

by particular congregations requiring their services, or appointed to churches by their superiors. The governments of New South Wales and Victoria assist the clergy, ministry, and chiefs of all creeds and persuasions; so that there is no state church in Australia. Until lately, properly qualified teachers, both public and private, were much in request; but the exodus from Britain during the past year has provided amply for the wants of the colonists, if we are not mistaken; for they had heard that the rising generation there were but ill provided in their scholastic institutions, amateurs and novices filling the highest situations; consequently there has been a *rush* to the antipodes from among our Dominies. The female portion of this ill-requited class in the mother country have better chances than their male compeers, for they soon get *married off*, leaving vacancies for new-comers.

To immigrants who follow the educated professions, we can with confidence assert, that high-class talent in their vocations is not only fully appreciated by the colonists, but it is remunerated in double proportion to inferior ability; for they have become disgusted with pretenders and empirics. Indeed, from the number of individuals who have been appointed by the government, as well as learned universities and courts of judicature, to fill important offices in these colonies, who have proved themselves unfit for their duties, the Australian people are now demanding a voice in their elections; and from the bold and just manner in which it has been put by the independent legislators of New South Wales, that colony may soon expect the Secretary of State to concede a portion of their privileges demanded. That old familiar saw, the "dregs fall to the wicked," has been too much acted upon hitherto by the imperial government and the British public in all that relates to the social and political condition of this group of colonies; they have been treated, too often, as a sort of moral dust-bin, a receptacle for the sweepings of learned chambers and Downing-street incapables, as well as Pentonville prisons. Even the merchant and ship-owner, until lately considered that any thing was good enough to send there in the shape of merchandise or ships; any old *tub* was deemed sea-worthy for the trade; and the cargoes of hardware, soft-goods, teas, sugars, wines

and spirits, were too frequently the veriest trash and old-stock sweepings from their warehouses, for which they expected to receive the highest prices. Experience has since taught them to their cost, that the colonists prefer the best article, for which they are able and willing to pay the highest prices, and that first-class vessels will always command the highest rates of passage-money and freight. We trust that the Colonial Office will take a leaf out of the merchant's journal in this respect, and send better men in future to conduct the general government business of these two most important colonies; for at present, under the peculiar circumstances which have come over the dependencies of New South Wales and Victoria, it is notorious that the major part of the badly-paid officials who have remained in office since the gold-discovery are remarkable only for their incompetency, from the governor of a colony down to a tide-waiter in the customs department.

As it is a matter of some importance for intending colonists possessed of capital to ascertain the safest channel through which to transmit their money to Sydney or Melbourne, we recommend them to take letters of credit upon the local branch banks in preference to any other way. Mr. Howitt, the well-known author, has published extensively through the press, the loss he sustained by taking Bank-of-England notes with him to Melbourne; and we have it from good authority, that the gold in the coffers of the banks is so much greater than the circulation of notes, that the colonists are apprehensive of a depreciation in the value of the sovereign, should the influx of gold coin in 1852 be continued throughout the present year; while the local one-pound note will always command twenty shillings. Many of our readers will be surprised to learn that bank-notes, cheques, and silver, constitute 90 per cent of the currency in Australia; it is rarely you meet with the sovereign in common circulation. The fact is, that paper currency is more convenient than gold for ordinary purposes; and as the colonists have always had full faith in the stability of the two old-established Anglo-Australian banks—the Bank of Australasia, and the Union Bank of Australia—which are conducted on the Scottish banking system, they consider their notes to be as safe as gold. These two

banks have their head-offices in London—the Bank of Australasia at 8 Austin Friars, and the Union Bank of Australia at 38 Old Broad street—where they grant letters of credit upon their branch establishments throughout the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, at the rate of 3 per cent premium for drafts at sight, and 2½ at 30 days after sight; these drafts are cashed in gold, silver, or bank-notes, as the receiver may demand.

THE END.

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